BUSH'S 9/11 WOES HAVE JUST BEGUN Ryan Lizz

THE NEW REPUBLIC

RUSSIA'S UNIMPORTANC
Stephen Kotkin

DOSTOEVSKY'S GOD
James Wood

CAN JOHN KERRY MAKE PEOPLE LIKE HIM?
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Crowley

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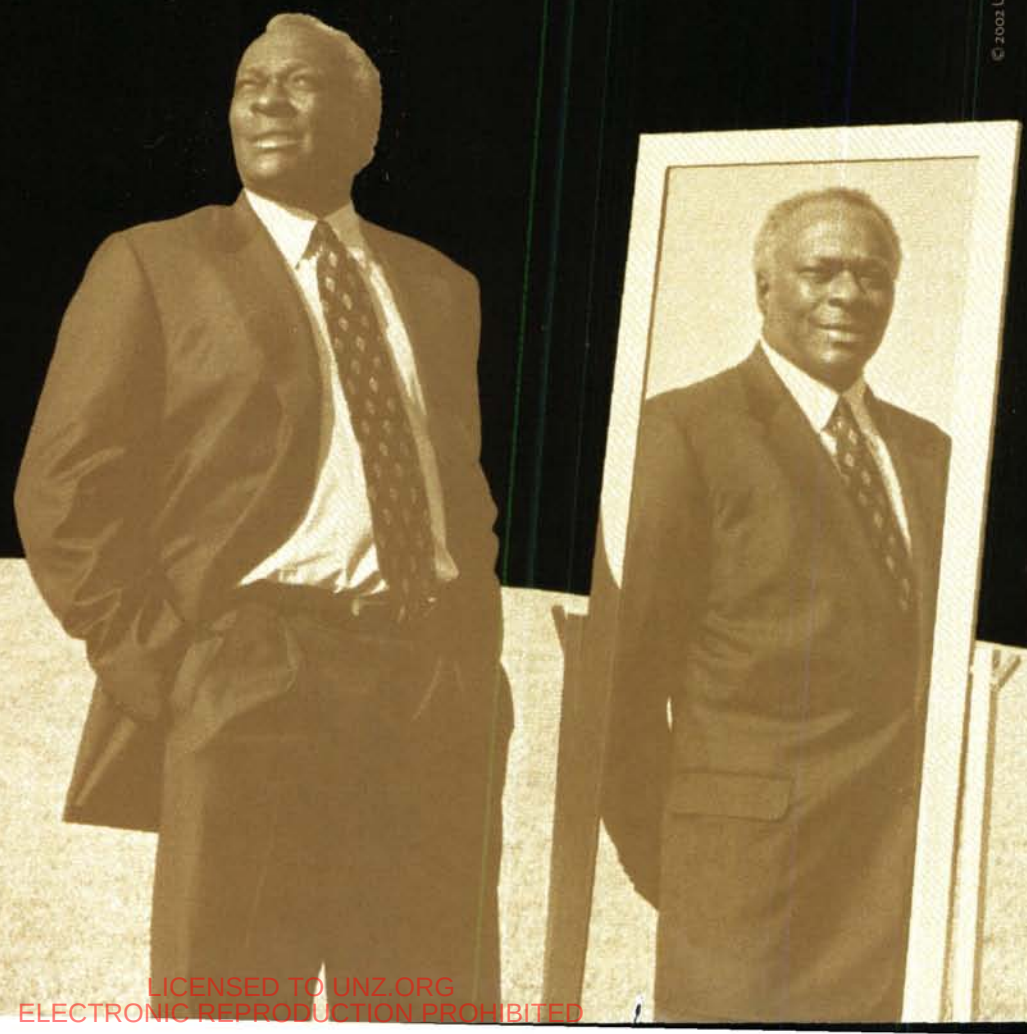

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CORRESPONDENCE

Action figure

TO THE EDITORS:

Congratulations: Only THE NEW REPUBLIC had the guts to call attention to the grotesquely overblown reputation of Cornel West, our great public intellectual ("The Pragmatist," April 29). His meteoric rise, the honors showered upon him, and the spectacle of Harvard and Princeton competing for him are surely the most telling indicators of the profound academic-intellectual decline this country has experienced in recent decades. His elevated status is likely to be seen by future social historians as evidence of a cultural malaise and the associated loss of nerve of our cultural elites. There is one important point your excellent editorial failed to make: Cornel West would not be where he is without the degeneration of what remains euphemistically called "affirmative action."

PAUL HOLLANDER
Professor Emeritus of Sociology
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Northampton, Massachusetts

Slip slidin' away

TO THE EDITORS:

Dr. Charles Krauthammer's "Crossing Lines" is one of the best articles I've seen for its grounding in fact and its independence from particular religious pronouncements about when personhood begins (April 29). But of the four objections Krauthammer advances, three (Objections II-IV) amount to "slippery slope" arguments in which the issue is not what the law will permit, but what scientists will do when they break that law by going to the next step. For instance, the notion that today it's a seven-day embryo and tomorrow it will be a child we will sacrifice assumes that no one is going to obey any laws anyway. (Why expect scientists to obey a total ban on cloning, but to go too far if therapeutic cloning is permitted?)

The only remaining argument (Objection I) has to do with the intrinsic worth of the embryo. "I do not believe a single cell has the moral or legal standing of a child," says Krauthammer. Nor does he think it's a mere "thing" having no standing whatsoever. Research cloning, he contends, confers nothing but "thingness" on the embryo, a view he fears will lead us down that slippery slope described in the other three objections. But scientists do not see just "thingness." Biologists stand in awe of the human embryo at any stage, perhaps more so when it is so different from the individual it could potentially become. No one takes research on embryos lightly. Every scientist must weigh the potential benefits from the research against the destruction of a potential human life. There are definitely two sides to that cost-benefit analysis, and this Krauthammer overlooks.

The next weeks may well be critical in the future health of Americans. The Senate will vote on bills to restrict human cloning for both reproductive and research purposes. There is little disagreement that reproductive cloning should not be undertaken. But while research cloning may or may not give us the "Holy Grail of modern biology," it is an avenue that we should pursue with vigor.

MICHAEL A. GOLDMAN, PH.D.
Professor
Department of Biology
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TO THE EDITORS:

Krauthammer makes a compelling case against research cloning. However, I was startled to read that the ensoulment argument against cloning "is unprovable. It rests on metaphysics. Either you believe it or you don't. The discussion ends there." Plato, Aristotle, or Thomas Aquinas would be very surprised to learn that metaphysics requires uncritical belief. In fact, they maintained that metaphysics moves us from thoughtless belief to knowledge. Contemporary Thomists like Pope John Paul II agree, using Thomistic concepts of act and potency to demonstrate the soul's existence. Unfortunately, by dismissing metaphysics in the name

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ANTI-SEMITISM.
It's not a HISTORY LESSON.
It's a CURRENT EVENT.

Part 1. The New Global Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism, the oldest form of hatred, has now moved into a somewhat alarming new global phase crossing boundaries of every type — geographical, national, political, religious and cultural.

There is an ideological coalition of anti-Jewish sentiment that is inter-connecting globally. We see it in the proliferation in the Arab media of vicious Nazi-like stereotyping of Jews, conspiracy theories and Holocaust denial. Its messages of hate influence Muslim immigrants in France to commit daily anti-Jewish acts. It overpowers a conference on racism in Durban with anti-Israel, anti-Zionist, anti-Jewish resolutions and statements.

And the Internet has given free access to the hatemongers in the U.S. to cross-pollinate with anti-Semites globally to spread their venom of hate on a scale never before possible.

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Sharpe Edge

According to Republicans, Democrats don't help the African American poor; they exploit them. Democrats, the GOP claims, judge black politicians not on whether they serve their constituents, but on whether they bring those constituents to the polls to vote for white Democratic candidates for governor, senator, or president. If they do, the party overlooks incompetence, corruption, demagoguery, whatever. In fact, a little racial demagoguery has its uses—it reminds black voters why they shouldn't vote for the GOP.

I've never liked this argument. I've always thought it overly cynical in its assessment of white Democrats, many of whom entered politics out of civil-rights-era idealism, and extraordinarily patronizing of black voters, whom Republicans seem to consider dupes chronically unable to comprehend their own self-interest. But I have to admit: After last week's election for mayor of Newark, New Jersey, the GOP line is harder to dismiss than it was before.

Last Tuesday, Newark went to the polls to choose between Sharpe James, a 16-year incumbent seeking a fifth term, and Cory Booker, a 33-year-old with less than four years' experience on the city council. James, who in 1995 claimed second prize in HBO's "America's Funniest Mayor" competition, is a flamboyant public servant—which is not to say he is a good one. When James became mayor in 1986, the job paid $80,000. When he stood for reelection last Tuesday, he was taking in $213,000, plus another $35,000 for his work as a state senator (a practice known in New Jersey politics as "double dipping"). In other words, he was earning more than his counterparts in America's ten largest cities, more than every one of the nation's 50 governors, and more than the vice president of the United States.

And what have the people of Newark gotten in return? In the 1990s the city lost 20 percent of its tax base—a statistic made even worse by the fact that Newark collects an abysmal 83 percent of the taxes it is owed. The city's infant mortality and unemployment rates are double the state average. Its murder rate is more than three times that of neighboring Jersey City and Patterson. Since James took office the city has destroyed more housing than it has built. Six years ago the state took over its schools. A 1999 poll ranked Newark as the worst place in the United States to raise a child. And in 1997 the mayor's chief of staff was convicted of bribery, and his police chief was found guilty of embezzlement. As one prosecutor told the *Newark Star-Ledger* in March of that year, "They should tie a yellow ribbon around City Hall and designate it a crime scene."

James has his defenders. During the campaign, they pointed to the 1997 construction of an acclaimed performing arts center in the heart of downtown and noted that some of Newark's horrid social indicators have recently started to turn around. They also changed the subject by noting the relative inexperience of the mayor's opponent, Cory Booker. There's some truth to that: Booker (whom—full disclosure—I vaguely knew in graduate school) grew up in a nearby suburb and only moved to Newark six years ago. But in his brief time on the city council, he has injected a moral urgency into Newark politics that has been painfully lacking during James's tenure: He staged a ten-day hunger strike at a drug-infested housing project and lived for five months in a trailer on a notorious drug corner in an effort to shame the police into action. And Booker's agenda reads like a guide to the best practices that reform-minded mayors have developed over the last decade, from quality-of-life policing to expanded after-school programs—practices that have never even been tried in Newark. Last year, when Booker pushed through a modest increase to the city's pitifully low recreation budget, James didn't even spend the extra money.

Perhaps realizing that policy debates don't play to his strength, James pursued a different reelection strategy. First, he put City Hall to work on his behalf. Police blocked Booker aides from distributing leaflets in housing projects; they tore Booker's signs from public property (until a court injunction stopped them); and a Booker campaign trailer was mysteriously ransacked and its computer files stolen. Second, James argued that Booker wasn't really black. "[He] acts like us, talks like us, but is not us," James said on one occasion. On another, he noted that, "You have to learn to be an African American, and we don't have time to train you." In passing, he accused Booker of taking money from the Klan.

In such a race, one might think state and national Democratic leaders would find it easy to choose sides. And indeed they did: Overwhelmingly, they backed James. Governor James McGreevey, who had received critical help from James in the 2000 Democratic gubernatorial primary, traveled to Newark in January and informed a Martin Luther King Day crowd that if they reelected his ally, the state would help build a stadium in the city for New Jersey's professional basketball and hockey teams. "Newark, you give me Sharpe James," the governor declared, "you get the Devils and Nets." Five days before the election, McGreevey returned to underscore the point, unveiling a stadium-funding proposal that, his aides suggested, would only go forward if Newark returned James to office. New Jersey's two Democratic senators, Robert Torricelli and Jon Corzine, endorsed James as well, with a Corzine aide noting the "good job" he had done for the city.

Just as important was the help James received from national African American Democrats. In James's campaign to prove that Booker wasn't sufficiently black, his backers often referred to the councilman's relatively light skin color. And Jesse Jackson, in town on James's behalf, joined in, noting Booker's "sheeplike appearance [and] wolflike characteristics." On Election Day, James campaigned with Al Sharpton by his side.

By late Tuesday night it was clear James had won. And it was clear his Democratic friends had helped put him over the top. He had won by turning the campaign from a debate over policy into a referendum on racial authenticity—something he couldn't have done without the national arbiters of blackness, Jackson and Sharpton, on his side. And he had won because of the power of incumbency, which allowed him to call in chits from powerful allies like McGreevey, Torricelli, and Corzine. At 10:55 p.m. on Election Day, standing next to Sharpton, James declared, "I would not be here without the support of a great governor."

A few days after the election, though, the Bergen County *Record* reported that the stadium deal might not come to pass after all. "Now that the election is over, they're backing off," explained one state senator. So Governor McGreevey, having essentially bribed Newark's struggling people to reelect an atrocious mayor, is now reneging on the deal. Republicans call that racial exploitation. What honest Democrat could disagree?

PETER BEINART

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Jewish Voices Against Israel's Occupation of Palestinian Territories

The occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem is killing Palestinians and Israelis alike and destroying Israel from within. There can be no peace or security for either until Israel completely evacuates its settlements in Palestinian territories, ends its military occupation, and returns to its pre-1967 borders.

As Jews, we call upon Israel:

- to agree to the immediate establishment of an international peacekeeping force in the occupied territories to protect civilians from violence by the Israeli military and settlers;
- to cease building or expanding settlements as a first step toward their complete evacuation.

As Jews and U.S. taxpayers, we call upon the U.S. government:

- to suspend military aid to Israel, which is used to maintain the occupation, until Israel withdraws completely from the occupied territories;
- to reduce economic aid to Israel by the amount spent on maintaining the settlements until all are evacuated;
- to redirect this reduction of economic aid toward reconstructing the devastated infrastructure of Palestine.

We urge Israel to acknowledge that it bears significant historical responsibility for the dispossession of the Palestinian people, and to work toward a just solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees.

Finally, deeply distressed over the lives lost in desperate attacks by Palestinians, we call upon the Palestinian Authority to make every effort to curtail acts of violence against civilians in Israel.

Israel's security policies harm all the peoples of the Middle East and make Israel less secure, not more.

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THE OCCUPATION MUST END.

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This is an abridged version of a more comprehensive statement written by ***Jewish Voices Against the Occupation (JVAO)****. The full text and its signers can be seen at www.jvao.org, or received from JVAO, P.O. Box 11606, Berkeley, CA 94712.*

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The eagle, the elk and the warrior

One day, a Cheyenne warrior was hunting alone, on foot. He came upon an elk lying dead by the side of a stream. Trapped in the antlers of the fallen elk was a large spotted eagle. The eagle spoke to the hunter.

"Free me from here," the eagle said, "and I will give you a gift."

The warrior did as the eagle re- [illegible] the elk's antlers and [illegible] the great bird flew [illegible] said to the warrior, "Go over [illegible] hill and you will see your gift." [illegible] he looked into [illegible] feathers. This [illegible]

The Cheyenne Eagle Blanket is an interpretation of this legend as told by Ben Nighthorse Campbell. It employs traditional Cheyenne graphics and parfleche design elements to retell the story. This limited-edition saddle blanket, measuring 66" x 40", is the third in the Spirit Series of Native American Blankets. It is woven of pure wool by the Pendleton Woolen Mills for the American Indian College Fund.

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Analyze This

DEMOCRATS DO NOT generally put much stock in President George W. Bush's intellectual ability. So it was a bit odd last week to hear Tom Daschle, Dick Gephardt, and Hillary Clinton imply that the president— having been told by the CIA on August 6 that Osama bin Laden's followers might try to hijack American planes—should have figured out that Al Qaeda terrorists were going to hijack American planes and then crash them into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9/11. "What we have to do now is to find out what the president, what the White House, knew about the events leading up to nine-eleven, when they knew it, and, most importantly, what was done about it at that time," Gephardt said. The Bush administration fired back, trotting out Vice President Dick Cheney to charge that such "incendiary" commentary was "thoroughly irresponsible and totally unworthy of national leaders in a time of war."

This nasty back-and-forth over what Bush knew, however, is beside the point. Although the White House has refused to divulge the full details of the August 6 briefing memo, it seems clear that its information about hijackings was exceedingly vague. According to *The Washington Post*, the memo's only mention of hijacking stemmed from an unconfirmed, three-year-old report from British intelligence that Al Qaeda operatives might hijack a plane to negotiate the release of imprisoned Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman. In other words, Bush wasn't negligent; he simply didn't know enough to stop September 11. The real question, one that neither Democrats—eager to score political points against the president—nor Republicans—wary of any critical examination of the Bush administration—are asking, is why he didn't know more.

Here, recent revelations do shed some light. Some of the blame for this monumental intelligence failure falls on the CIA (see "Memogate," by Richard Miniter, page 12), and some falls on the FBI. In the latter case, the most damning disclosure is that on July 10 of last year, an FBI agent in Phoenix sent a memo to FBI headquarters expressing concern that a number of Arab and Middle Eastern men—two of whom were thought to have possible links to Al Qaeda or to bin Laden—were enrolled at an Arizona flight school. The FBI maintains that none of the people under investigation in Arizona were linked to 9/11 and that the memo, in and of itself, would not have prevented the attacks. That may be true. But the Phoenix memo was one piece in a larger puzzle, a piece that along with others—the 1999 analysis for the National Intelligence Council that mentioned the possibility of suicide hijackings and the August 2001 arrest of Zacarias Moussaoui—might have raised suspicions that something like 9/11 was in the works. The problem is that the Phoenix memo was never shared with the people whose job it was to piece together that puzzle. According to *The New York Times*, the memo was reviewed only by investigators at FBI headquarters, not by analysts. This is important because investigators, by nature, are small-picture thinkers; they collect evidence, bring a case to trial, and then move on to something else. Analysts, on the other hand, think big-picture—dwelling on one topic for years—so they possess the deep knowledge that allows them to see connections between seemingly disparate information. Had the memo gone to analysts, it might have sounded a few alarms, given those analysts' probable awareness that suicide hijackings were an emerging terrorist tactic. The Phoenix memo would have also been fresh in their minds one month later when field agents in Minnesota told headquarters about a suspicious flight student named Moussaoui.

The FBI's failings when it comes to strategic analysis are nothing new. Although the Bureau has long had analysts, it has not generally relied on them for the sort of strategic analysis that might have foreseen something like 9/11. Instead the Bureau has usually tasked its analysts with clerical duties, like compiling evidence for wiretap requests and preparing talking points for officials called before congressional committees. In the wake of September 11, FBI Director Robert Mueller has pledged to change this: He has created an Office of Intelligence and plans to hire 100 new strategic analysts.

But the FBI can't fix itself entirely from the inside. And that's where the politicians come in. Daschle and other top Democrats are calling for a 14-member independent commission to investigate the government's counterterror efforts before 9/11. Republicans are resisting the idea, claiming the commission will produce an anti-Bush witch-hunt—a partisan slur unfortunately given some credence by the Democrats' recent behavior. Democrats should drop their efforts to pin blame for 9/11 on Bush; Republicans, in turn, should drop their opposition to an independent commission. And then, perhaps, 14 people can go to work determining just what went wrong before 9/11 and how the FBI and the rest of our government can better protect the United States the next time. ■

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NOTEBOOK

GUY TALK: As we've pointed out before, President Bush has recently taken to amusing audiences by recounting how, during the campaign, he promised never to run a deficit except in case of war, recession, or national emergency. The problem is that there's a long record of Bush promising not to touch the Social Security surplus—but no record of him ever listing these exceptions. The White House has never responded to requests from TNR or other media outlets to provide corroboration. And what makes it all the more suspicious is that Bush's recollection of his alleged campaign promise continually mutates. Last August he claimed to have promised not to dip into the Social Security surplus except in case of war or recession. Subsequently, he claimed only to have promised not to run a *deficit* (even with the help of Social Security surpluses), and he added a third exception: "national emergency." In the last couple of months he's added more detail to this account. Now, as Bush tells it in his speeches, he made the promise "in Chicago." He says he was asked if he would ever run a deficit by "a reporter," although at various points he has identified the questioner as "a fellow," "some guy," "they," "somebody," and "the guy." (As in, "I remember campaigning in Chicago one time, and the guy said, 'Would you ever deficit spend?'") When did this Chicago promise occur? Time after time, Bush says only that it happened "during the campaign" or "when I was running for president." Last week, though, he rendered the story thusly: "When I was campaigning here [in Chicago], they said, 'Hey, Mr. President, would you ever have a deficit?'" It would, of course, be odd for anybody—let alone a reporter—to have addressed Bush as "Mr. President" during the campaign. The next day Bush recounted the episode as having taken place "in 2002." Perhaps this last rendition was a slip of the tongue, but Bush seems to be saying that he announced the exceptions to his budget promise only after the promise was already broken. Which is, after all, almost certainly the truth.

NOONAN'S WAR: For months Democrats have charged that Republicans are exploiting the war on terrorism for domestic political gain. Following the uproar over last week's 9/11 revelations, Republicans have charged that Democrats are exploiting the intelligence failures that led to the attacks for domestic political gain. What everyone seems to agree on, though, is that there is a distinction between the war on terrorism and domestic politics. Everyone, that is, except *Wall Street Journal* columnist Peggy Noonan, whose deteriorating political morality has been noted in these pages before (see "Right Reverent" by Jonathan Chait, March 25). In a May 20 column, Noonan argued that the Bush administration's shameless, anti-free-trade panders in recent weeks—on steel tariffs and the farm bill—are actually *part* of the war on terrorism. How so? Wrote Noonan, "It's all about the war. Which means it's all about the 2002 congressional elections.... The congressional elections could produce a Democratic House and a more heavily Democratic Senate. Mr. Bush will do almost anything to keep that from happening, and I think people sense it. Because if it does happen, his ability to prosecute the war will be weakened.... The war effort would be compromised." So, you see, the war on terrorism is essentially the same thing as, well, the war on Democratic officeholders. By this logic, *of course* the president is justified in committing a few shameless political panders. But why stop there? If keeping Democrats out of office is necessary to protect the nation from terrorism, then pretty much *anything* the administration does in that effort is justified. Why not freeze the assets of Democratic challengers? Or place liberal

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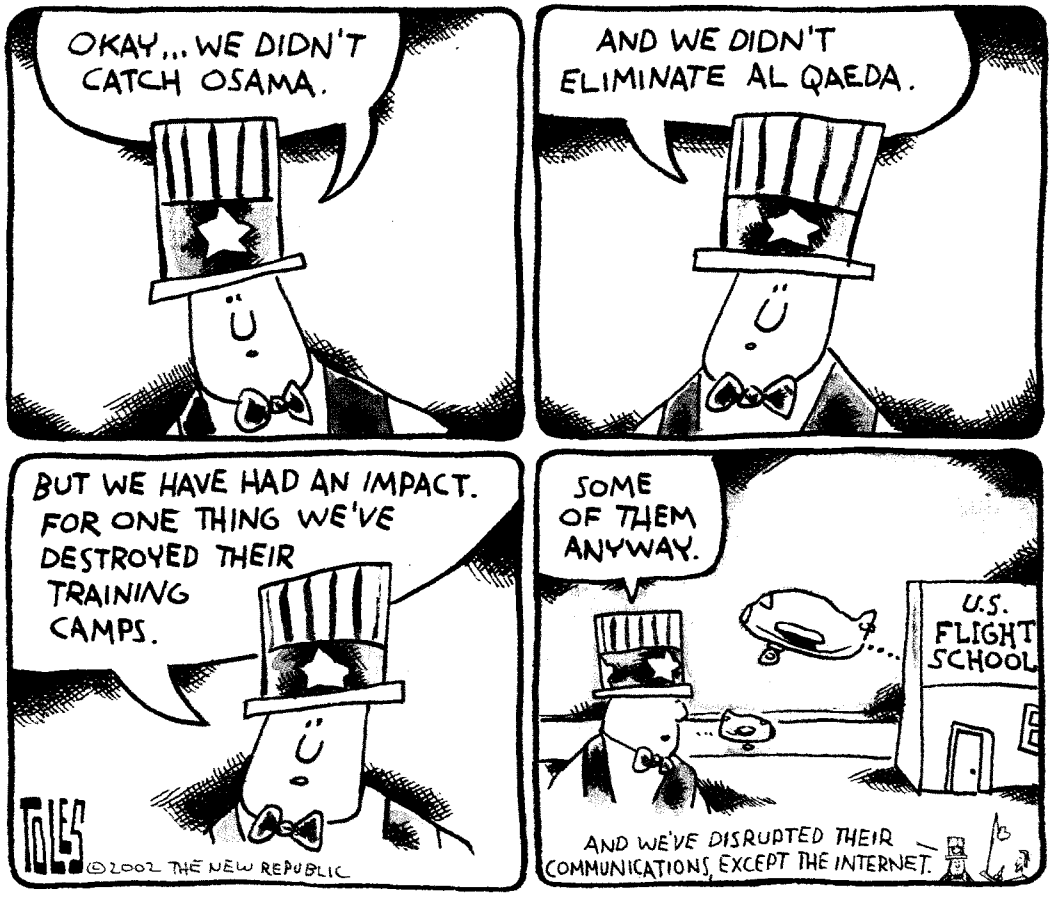
incumbents under house arrest to keep them off the campaign trail? That's ridiculous, right? Of course it is—it's just too bad Noonan's editors didn't think so.

SHRUM AND SHRUMMER: Bob Shrum may be the most influential strategist in the Democratic Party. His particular brand of economic populism formed the basis for Al Gore's "People Versus the Powerful" rhetoric in the 2000 campaign. And he's been shopping the approach around to any number of the 2004 Democratic presidential hopefuls. In addition to Gore, Shrum has long-standing ties to Dick Gephardt and John Kerry, and he's currently whispering in the ear of John Edwards. But before any of these contenders sign up Shrum for the People Versus the Powerful Reunion Tour, we encourage them to check out Shrum's most recent handiwork: the Democratic gubernatorial primary campaign of Bob Casey Jr. in Pennsylvania, which was decided Tuesday. If ever a state or an election was tailor-made for Shrum-style populism, it's a Democratic primary in Pennsylvania. The state has one of the largest populations of working-class voters in the country. It has more old people than any state but Florida. And because it was a primary, only Democrats went to the polls. Add to this the fact that Casey, the son of the late popular Governor Bob Casey Sr., enjoyed tremendous name recognition and had no trouble raising money—more than $14 million, in fact. Unfortunately, Casey also ran a model Shrumian campaign, railing against the "insiders" and "big interests" and pandering obsessively to labor. The result? He lost by twelve percentage points to former Philadelphia Mayor Ed Rendell, who put forward a more socially liberal, less economically populist message. Analysts who've tried to pinpoint what cost Casey the race focus on a late barrage of nasty TV ads aired by the Casey campaign—ads that apparently backfired by depressing turnout in the southwestern part of the state, an area in which Casey was hoping to rack up a big margin. The media consultant behind those ads? A Washington firm called Shrum, Devine & Donilon.

TRADING PLACES: "Economic freedom creates habits of liberty. And habits of liberty create expectations of democracy.... Trade freely with China, and time is on our side."—George W. Bush, making the case that trade will bolster freedom in China, May 17, 2000

"I want you to understand that I know what trade means with a tyrant. It means that we will underwrite tyranny, and we cannot let that happen."—Bush, making the case that trade will bolster dictatorship in Cuba, May 20, 2002

EDITOR-ASSISTED ERROR: In Sherwin B. Nuland's essay about physician-assisted suicide in last week's issue, the sentence on page 29 that read "To support that decision, it is necessary to agree with it" should have read "To support that decision, it is not necessary to agree with it." A small change, but about matters of life and death it is not possible to be too careful.



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: In last week's profile of White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales ("Friend of the Court," by Ryan Lizza), the name of Edward Blum of the American Civil Rights Institute was spelled incorrectly. Also, the heated exchange between Gonzales and the Center for Equal Opportunity's Roger Clegg took place at a Heritage Foundation event in Philadelphia, not at a Federalist Society meeting in Washington. We regret the errors. ■

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Did the CIA leak the news about 9/11?

Memogate

By RICHARD MINITER

LAST WEEK THE United States learned that, more than one month before September 11, President George W. Bush received a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) memo mentioning a possible Al Qaeda hijacking. News of the memo took Washington by storm. It dominated newspaper headlines and TV talk shows. Democrats abandoned their longstanding caution regarding the war on terrorism and demanded to know what Bush knew and when he knew it. The White House counterattacked.

But the "smoking gun" isn't all that smoking. The memo—prepared at presidential request—vaguely mentioned hijackings. But it didn't mention *suicide* hijackings—even though Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups had recently attempted several. And because it didn't mention suicide hijackings, it didn't mention Al Qaeda's well-known shortage of pilots. (In 1993 Osama bin Laden paid some $200,000 for a jet plane he then had delivered to the Sudan, where he was then staying; but when he departed for Afghanistan in May 1996, he didn't have any pilots to take the plane with him, according to Sudanese officials I spoke with. It's still on an airfield in Khartoum—I saw it there last month.) And because the memo didn't mention Al Qaeda's need for pilots, it never mentioned Al Qaeda's penetration of American flight schools—even though a now-famous Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) memo from earlier that summer had drawn attention to exactly that danger. Last week national security adviser Condoleezza Rice called the August 6 memo too "generalized" and devoid of any new intelligence or analysis. She was being polite.

The real scandal, in other words, isn't Bush's non-reaction to the CIA memo. It is the memo itself—which testifies powerfully to the shoddy nature of the CIA's pre-9/11 anti-terrorism work. But rather than focusing on CIA incompetence, the media and congressional Democrats have used the memo to push the juicier story of White House inaction. Which may be just what the people who leaked the memo wanted—because the people who leaked it may be from the CIA itself.

WHY WOULD THE CIA have leaked the memo? Start with motive. The Agency has been defensive about its pre-9/11 failures from the start; and in recent months the House and Senate Intelligence Committees' investigation into the intelligence failures preceding the attacks has made it much more so. Senate Intelligence Committee Vice Chairman Richard Shelby is on record as calling for CIA Director George Tenet's resignation, and last month the committee forced Tenet's longtime associate, L. Britt Snider, to resign as the committee's staff director. In response, the CIA is obstructing the investigation as much as it dares. It has barred its employees from giving committee staff its business cards, according to *The Washington Post*. And—using a classic bureaucratic stalling tactic that won't win any friends on Capitol Hill—Langley has refused to turn over documents it got from the FBI and other agencies without those agencies' approval. Recently, when the Agency learned that some Senate Intelligence Committee staffers faulted the CIA for failing to grasp the significance of an April 2001 meeting in Prague between 9/11 ringleader Mohammed Atta and Iraqi intelligence officer Ahmed al-Ani, the CIA suggested that the meeting probably never occurred. (Had they grasped its significance, they might have investigated Atta and found that he was in the United States.) Unfortunately for Langley, Czech intelligence is standing by its story, and a Czech member of parliament briefed by that nation's intelligence service believes airport security cameras caught the meeting. Add to this the committee's apparent interest in the

RICHARD MINITER, a senior fellow at the Centre for the New Europe in Brussels, is author of the *The Duel: Clinton's Secret War on Bin Laden*, which will be published by Simon & Schuster's Free Press in January.

MARK ANDRESEN

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Where the Flat Tax Goes from Here

Alvin Rabushka is the David and Joan Traitel Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution.

In 1981 Robert Hall and I proposed a comprehensive 19 percent flat tax to replace the U.S. personal and corporate income taxes. The idea resulted in numerous congressional bills during the 1980s. It underpinned President Reagan's Tax Reform Act of 1986, which resulted in two rates, 15 and 28 percent, down from a top rate of 70 percent when Reagan took office in 1981. In 1992 presidential candidate Jerry Brown, followed by Steve Forbes in 1996, reinvigorated the flat tax. Congressional Republican leaders chimed in with their support. Nonetheless, since 1991, the U.S. tax code has regressed; three new higher rates were added, with the top rate increased from 28.0 to 39.6 percent.

Despite regression in the United States, the flat tax has been successful in several new countries that emerged from the breakup of the Soviet Union. Estonia enacted a 26 percent flat tax beginning in 1994. Latvia followed suit with a 25 percent flat tax in 1995.

The biggest flat tax success story comes from Russia. In 2001 a 13 percent flat tax took effect, replacing three brackets with a top rate of 30 percent. The new code improved incentives and compliance. In 2001 revenue increased 28 percent in real, inflation-adjusted terms. Effective January 1, 2002, the government reduced the corporate rate from 35 to 24 percent and recently proposed a major reform for small business enterprises (SBEs). SBEs with no more than twenty employees and turnover below $320,000 will be able to pay the lesser of a flat 20 percent tax on profits or a flat 8 percent tax on revenues. SBEs will be exempt from value-added tax, sales tax, property tax, and social insurance tax. Other former Soviet bloc countries may follow in Russia's footsteps.

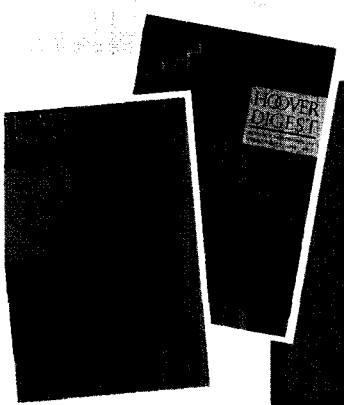
In April 2002 Singapore proposed a major restructuring of its tax system. The centerpiece is a reduction in corporate and personal income tax rates. In the next three years, corporate rates will fall from 24.5 to 20.0 percent, and the top personal income tax rate, from 26 to 20 percent. With this measure, Singapore extends a process of marginal tax-rate reductions that cut the top personal rate from a high of 55 percent in 1961 to 40 percent in 1978, 34 percent in 1980, 30 percent in 1982, and 26 percent in 1985. During this period, the threshold at which the top rate bites increased from S$90,000 to S$750,000 (US$1=S$1.80).

To fill out the story, Hong Kong maintains a flat tax of 15 percent on personal income. The Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey impose a 20 percent flat tax. The Freedom Party in Austria proposed a flat tax during the 1999 national election and became part of Austria's governing coalition for the first time in modern history. Other European parties are considering the flat tax in their economic platforms.

All in all, the flat tax is alive and well overseas. Now if only in the United States!

— Alvin Rabushka

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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CIA's long-standing inability to hire Arabic-, Turkic-, and other language specialists; its legendary refusal to share information with other parts of the government; and the fact that it analyzes less than 10 percent of the data that its costly satellites collect, and you have an investigation that frightens Langley to death. The August 6 memo has focused congressional and media attention on the White House. And it has resuscitated calls for scuttling the current inquiry altogether and replacing it with a blue-ribbon commission of outside wise men—a change that would surely please the CIA.

Then there's opportunity. Until September 11 the daily intelligence briefing was confined to the president, the national security adviser, the CIA briefing officer, and the CIA director himself. While Bush generally let Tenet sit in, the exclusive briefing circle has not widened much. Only Tenet and a handful of top CIA officials would have had access to the August 6 memo. Which suggests that either they leaked it, or they allowed it to fall into the hands of someone who did.

Some have speculated that the leak came from the FBI, perhaps to distract attention from the Phoenix flight-school memo, which the Bureau seems never to have acted on. But it's unlikely the FBI had access to the August 6 memo, since before September 11 no one in the Bureau was invited to presidential intelligence briefings. (That's changed now.)

The Bureau doesn't have as strong a motive either. Unlike Tenet, who had been on the job for four years when the World Trade Center fell, FBI Director Robert Mueller had been in his post only a week or so—and almost no one has called for his head. What's more, the FBI is widely considered to have done pretty well since the attacks: It has caught the suspected twentieth hijacker, Zacarias Moussaoui; established a solid evidentiary trail concerning the 9/11 conspiracy, though several gaps remain; and built a solid case against alleged shoe bomber Richard Reid. And that's just the public record. Middle Eastern and East African intelligence officers say the FBI—working through legal attachés at U.S. embassies in the region—has arranged for the transfer of some 300 Al Qaeda members from terrorist-sponsoring nations like Sudan and Libya to third countries—in particular, Egypt—for interrogation. While Senate Intelligence Committee members and staffers remain critical of the FBI for its handling of the Moussaoui case and the Phoenix memo, and intend to probe those matters further, one staffer privately says that the anger at the FBI—which is considerable—is nothing compared with the hostility directed at the CIA.

That leaves Congress. Democrats clearly have an interest in embarrassing the White House, but the best-informed members of Congress—those on the Intelligence Committees—realize that if it gets out that they or their staffs are leaking to the press, the White House may stop giving them sensitive material. And even if someone on the Hill did leak the August 6 memo, it's highly unlikely they got it from the White House—which had an obvious interest in it *not* getting out. More likely, someone in Congress got the memo from the CIA, which handed it over in the knowledge that it could find its way to the press.

So far Director Tenet has escaped scrutiny in the August 6 memo dustup. But unfortunately for him, the "What did Bush know?" story that the memo initially provoked may now be fading. And you can bet that a White House with a deep hatred of leaks has already put out the bloodhounds to find the source of this one. The CIA's effort to deflect the political heat, in other words, may end up backfiring. And sometime later this year, don't be surprised if Tenet quietly announces that he is leaving his post to "spend more time with his family." If he does, the August 6 memo will have finally done some good after all. ■

White House Watch

Inquiring Minds

By Ryan Lizza

The furious volley of charges between Democrats and the White House over what President Bush knew about the terrorist threat before 9/11 seems to have produced some clear winners and losers. After a week of acid exchanges, the consensus in Washington is that Democrats are in retreat and Bush is jetting off to Europe victorious. The White House supposedly won the skirmish with a furious two-pronged, vice-presidential counterattack. First, Dick Cheney questioned the patriotism of Democrats who implied that Bush had actionable intelligence about September 11. Then, even more cynically, the vice president—followed by a string of other administration officials—began a spooky four-day barrage of terror warnings that started with anonymous sources proclaiming an increased level of Al Qaeda "chatter" about attacks and ended with the secretary of defense declaring that terrorists would "inevitably" obtain weapons of mass destruction. Less than one week after the initial report that Bush had been briefed last August of an Al Qaeda plan to hijack airplanes, the White House was brimming with confidence. On Tuesday, when asked if the president thought that Democrats were in retreat, Bush spokesman Ari Fleischer sounded triumphant: "He understands politics will occasionally flare up, but I think it's come and it's gone from his point of view."

Not quite. Yes, the White House has forced Democrats to ratchet down their criticism, but it may prove a Pyrrhic victory. In fact, just as the White House was publicly proclaiming success, it was privately telling reporters that the scuffle could have worrying long-term consequences because, for the first time since the attacks, it has given political momentum to Democratic calls for an outside commission to investigate what went wrong. And such high-profile snooping could tilt the partisan balance of power throughout 2002.

For months Democratic legislation creating an independent commission to probe the intelligence failures that led to 9/11 has languished in Congress. The president has opposed the idea since at least early February, when Cheney personally phoned Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle to warn that such an investigation would harm national secu-

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rity during a war. Not even the combined star power of the bill's sponsors, Senators Joe Lieberman and John McCain, did much to catch the media's attention. After 9/11 the White House successfully limited congressional oversight regarding the attacks to a joint investigation by the Senate and House Intelligence Committees, which are notoriously deferential to the agencies they oversee. And even as that joint inquiry fell prey to partisan fighting and CIA stonewalling, few Democrats dared to raise the idea of a more vigorous probe—until last week.

The revelations about Bush's August 6 briefing, coming on the heels of the Phoenix memo and Zacarias Moussaoui's detention, obviously don't suggest that Bush knew about 9/11 in advance. But they buttress the Democrats' call for a wider investigation. Conservatives point to the president's 70 percent approval ratings and argue that the recent Democratic attacks on Bush were ineffective. But those same polls show that Americans now want a high-profile investigation of how 9/11 happened. On Tuesday, after Daschle announced his support for a commission, the White House and congressional Republicans launched an aggressive effort to kill it. But even prominent conservatives like George Will and the editors of *The Weekly Standard* have now endorsed the idea. As New Jersey Democrat Robert Torricelli told a reporter last week, "The debate about the relative merits of a national commission is effectively over."

If the Democrats get their commission, the administration will have lost control over the 9/11 probe, and there is no telling what embarrassing or incriminating information will come to light. And for the White House, the problem is broader than just one inquiry. In the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 intelligence flap, congressional Democrats have moved to assert their oversight authority on a host of issues the Bushies had hoped were dead. Legislation to make Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge a Cabinet secretary who can be called before Congress is gaining momentum: Dick Gephardt, citing the Phoenix memo and other recent disclosures, announced his support for the bill Tuesday; and on Wednesday Joe Lieberman's Governmental Affairs Committee approved it. Also this week, Democrats turned the House debate on an Afghan aid bill into an opportunity to attack Bush's approach to security and nation-building in postwar Afghanistan. On another front, Lieberman issued the first congressional subpoenas to the White House on Wednesday, demanding information about contacts with Enron. There is a larger dynamic operating here: If at first Bush used 9/11 to neuter Congress, Bush's new 9/11 vulnerability is allowing Congress to reassert itself.

For Democrats up for reelection this year, the recent sparring with Bush offers the first opportunity to carve out some war-on-terror bona fides. The best example is Tuesday's House debate on the Afghan aid bill. The legislation authorizing the funds could have passed quickly under what is known as "suspension of the rules," a format for legislation that enjoys wide support and which requires a two-thirds majority vote. But Democrats insisted on a longer debate so they could beat up Bush. Members took to the floor to challenge the president's approach on everything from refugees and warlordism to the health and education of Afghan children. Democrats are saying that while Bush may have won the war, Americans still need Democrats to make sure Afghan kids get health care and don't step on land mines. This is the kind of thing members can take back to their districts to insulate them from the president's popularity; it's proof that they too are contributing to the war on terror. Most importantly, Tom Lantos, ranking member of the House Committee on International Relations, added a provision to the aid bill that requires Bush to come up with a coherent strategy to provide security for all of Afghanistan, not just Kabul (which enjoys an international peacekeeping force). Such micromanaging of the administration's war on terror by Congress was unthinkable just a few months ago.

For the Democrats in Congress who want to run against Bush in 2004, the recent flap over intelligence failures provides a way to regain control over the most potent weapon they possess: the power to investigate the White House. The administration used 9/11 to restrict the damaging fishing expeditions to which every recent president has been subjected. With at least half a dozen senators angling for Bush's job, stopping such inquiries is vital to the White House. (It's one reason the White House is obsessed with regaining the Senate this year—it would knock the pedestals out from under most of Bush's potential 2004 opponents.) But last week changed all that. Throughout the week's unpleasantness, Republicans angrily accused Democrats of trying to tear down the president because they are frustrated by his high poll numbers. That's only partly true: Bush's approval rating has been dropping by two to three points every month no matter what other political forces have been at play. What Democrats are really doing—and what the White House fears is working—is showing that no matter how much the country admires Bush, it needs a Democratic Congress to keep him in check. That may not be as sexy as arguing that Bush could have prevented 9/11, but if the Democrats use their recent momentum to get their way on an outside commission, aid to Afghanistan, a Department of Homeland Security, and a wider Enron probe, the consequences for Bush could be bad enough. ■

Will McCain-Feingold breed Democratic fratricide?

Petty Cash

By Franklin Foer

For employees of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), November 6, 2002, will be a scary day. Parties shed excess staff after virtually every election. But November 6 doesn't just mark the end of an election cycle; it marks the beginning of the McCain-Feingold era. And with the party deprived of the $250 million in soft money it raises every two

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years, this year's DNC cutbacks could reach "Chainsaw" Al Dunlap proportions. According to one top Democrat, the party's specialists in ethnic outreach and constituent relations will be canned, as will its experts in get-out-the-vote and field organization. In all, party chair Terry McAuliffe will likely sack as many as 100 of the party's roughly 400 employees. That's one reason the DNC has canceled long-standing plans to construct a palatial new headquarters (see "Building Block" by Michael Crowley, May 27). As one Democrat explains, "They don't need the space because they won't have the people."

It's not just that McCain-Feingold will force the DNC to downsize dramatically; it will force it to downsize a lot more than will the GOP—which boasts many more of the hard-money donors who will be able to continue giving once the new law takes effect. So Democrats have begun searching for ways to compete in the post-soft-money era. And the good news is that they have some plans. The bad news is that those plans may vastly increase the political power of trial lawyers, labor unions, and environmental groups—the liberal stalwarts who will replace the party itself once the DNC can no longer raise millions in soft money. In other words, campaign finance reform may unintentionally recreate the pre-Clinton days of bitter infighting between liberals and New Democrats—only this time without a strong party organization to referee.

THERE'S NO SINGLE Democratic plan for conquering the post-McCain-Feingold universe. "The party is a long way from that," says Ellen Malcolm, president of EMILY's List, a group dedicated to electing pro-choice Democratic women and one of the liberal organizations on which the Democrats will increasingly rely. Because the DNC doesn't know how the Federal Election Commission will interpret some of McCain-Feingold's language, and because they can't predict the outcome of Mitch McConnell's legal challenges, the party can't focus solely on any one response. Nonetheless, the broad outlines of a strategy are beginning to fall into place.

There are two main tasks previously accomplished with soft money that McCain-Feingold will require the DNC to hand off, in large part, to new entities: get-out-the-vote efforts—involving everything from direct mail to yard signs—and "issue ad" campaigns in support of candidates. To deal with the former, the party is likely to revamp a group called the Association of State Democratic Chairs (ASDC). Currently, the ASDC is a little-utilized appendage of the DNC. "Four to six of the state parties are nothing more than post office boxes," one operative told me. "Its only claim to fame is that it's the place the Watergate burglars broke into." But the DNC hopes that with roughly $10 million in seed money from the AFL-CIO, this group can be transformed. Soon after November 6, party operatives speculate, it will hire refugees from the DNC and become something like a shadow party, opening its own state offices and running most of the party's get-out-the-vote operation. Labor could give the ASDC vast sums because the association would sever its affiliation with the party and reorganize itself under "527" tax status—a loophole in McCain-Feingold that allows political advocacy groups to accept and spend unlimited amounts, provided that they don't "coordinate" with campaigns and that the money goes into neither party nor candidate coffers. (Under an alternative scenario, the ASDC would maintain its current status and focus on corralling big donors into writing $10,000 checks to specific state Democratic committees—the legal contribution limit under the new law, and five times as much as can be given to individual candidates.)

But no matter how the ASDC is reorganized, it's unlikely to have the money to conduct the extensive issue ad campaigns on which both parties have lavished millions since the days of Dick Morris. It's here that Democrats hope liberal interest groups will pick up the slack. The problem, of course, is that a wave of chaotic, uncoordinated ads funded by a variety of liberal groups interested in different issues could do nearly as much harm as good. Enter Mike Lux, a veteran of People for the American Way and of Bill Clinton's Office of Public Liaison. Last year, long before it was clear McCain-Feingold would pass, Lux set up a group called the Progressive Donor Network to improve the electoral coordination and efficiency of liberal groups like the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) and the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL). And McCain-Feingold's passage makes Lux's network much more powerful. "We're always going to do independent work," says NARAL's Kate Michelman. "But Mike Lux's group could help us think carefully about the issues that really are most mobilizing. We can save ourselves from duplicating efforts and coordinate where each of us is going to be." Lux hopes to establish a common fund to pool resources that will be used to cut ads collectively. Decisions on which ads to run, and where, would be made by a board of directors made up of representatives from contributing groups—perhaps the AFL-CIO, LCV, NARAL, and the Association of Trial Lawyers of America. And the effort is quickly acquiring cachet. In April, Lux convened a Washington meeting that drew presidential contenders John Edwards, Tom Daschle, and Dick Gephardt. Operatives from interest groups say that superstar consultants James Carville and Bob Shrum have signed up to advise the group. And according to one, McAuliffe has been putting big donors in touch with Lux.

BUT THERE ARE serious problems with the ASDC-Lux solution. First, many big Democratic donors don't give out of ideology; they give because they want access. Indeed, ever since Clinton, the party has relied on an array of events—schmoozy dinners with politicians, coffees at the White House—designed to provide just that. But neither the ASDC nor Lux's group can offer donors access to pols without violating McCain-Feingold, which prohibits candidates from soliciting soft money that will be spent on their own campaigns. "We'd gotten really good at working within the old system," says one DNC official. "But without federal officeholders making the pitch, I've got no idea how we'll convince these people to give now."

Worse, the Lux solution will likely increase the clout of liberal interest groups vis-à-vis the party, which may incline

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those groups to increasingly advocate their ideological interests at the party's expense. Specifically, the groups funding the Progressive Donor Network may refuse to help the conservative Democratic candidates—often pro-gun and/or pro-life—who can win races in moderate-to-conservative swing districts. Indeed, if the present is any guide, they may even attack such candidates in the primaries in favor of more liberal (and less electable) alternatives. You can glimpse this divisive future in the current work of EMILY's List. Two months ago the group spent about $400,000 on ads attacking ex-Clintonista Rahm Emanuel, who was running in the primary for an Illinois House seat, for supporting NAFTA. It's not entirely clear whether EMILY's List funded the ads because Emanuel is pro-free-trade (trade isn't one of the group's primary issues) or because he is a man (though Emanuel is pro-choice, EMILY's List preferred rival candidate Nancy Kaszak). But if the reason is the former (or even a little of both), EMILY's List may have been pursuing a strategy that will grow more common in the years to come—liberal groups using a host of different issues to try to knock out more centrist Democrats in primaries. And if it's those groups that have the big bucks to spend on issue ads—and not the party itself—there will be nothing to stop them.

ADDING TO THE potential for fratricide, a group called the New Democrat Network (NDN) has recently begun billing itself as the centrist counterbalance for the McCain-Feingold era. The group was started in 1996 by ex-Clinton campaign aide Simon Rosenberg, with an assist from Joe Lieberman and John Breaux, both of whom serve on its executive committee. Like the Progressive Donor Network, NDN is scrambling to fill the void left by the party's decline. It has hired Tom Ochs, a political consultant who used to partner with the legendary Bob Squires, along with recruiting Vic Fazio (the former chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee) and Joe Andrew (former co-chairman of the DNC), to help devise a plan for capturing the corporate soft-money donations that today flow to the DNC. The group, which doled out $5.8 million in the 2000 cycle—mostly from corporate interests such as banking and pharmaceuticals and from high-tech executives like Microsoft's Steve Ballmer and Cisco's John Chambers—plans to raise $9 million this time around. And that's before McCain-Feingold even takes effect. "NDN will be the most important political organization in the country," says Andrew, capturing the grandiosity of the group's plans.

So the national Democratic Party—which, whatever its flaws, generally stays out of the internecine bloodletting of contested primaries—could give way to two competing, well-funded ideological blocs. Every two years these blocs would spend millions battling one another for control of the party. "Friendly competition could easily become unfriendly competition," says one party veteran. "And here's the important fact: Every dollar spent in the primaries is a dollar that isn't spent trying to beat Republicans." And considering that the GOP will probably have many more dollars to begin with, that could be bad news indeed. ■

The Supreme Court misunderstands porn.

Minor Infraction

By JEFFREY ROSEN

OPPONENTS OF THE Child Online Protection Act are putting their best face on last week's Supreme Court decision to send *Ashcroft* v. *ACLU* back to a lower court for further study. The ACLU was thrilled when a Philadelphia district court, concerned that the law violated free speech, temporarily banned it in 1999. And Ann Beeson, the ACLU lawyer who argued the case before the Supreme Court, said the Court "clearly had enough doubts about this broad censorship law to leave in place the ban, which is an enormous relief to our clients."

But that's too rosy a reading of the Court's fractured opinions. In fact, the five-to-four decision suggests that a majority of justices have embraced the implausible claim that underlies the Child Online Protection Act and obscenity law more generally: that there is a national consensus about which sexually explicit materials are appropriate for teenagers as well as adults. But this consensus no longer exists. The 1950s-era consensus on obscenity to which the justices are clinging has been overtaken by the reality of America's viewing habits and sexual mores. And unless the Court abandons this archaic legal framework, which allows America's most conservative communities to impose their values on the rest of the nation, it could dramatically undermine free speech on the Internet.

Passed in 1998, the Child Online Protection Act (COPA) defines "material that is harmful to minors" as any communication—including pictures, writings, or recordings—that, in the eyes of "the average person, applying contemporary community standards," is designed to "appeal to ... the prurient interest"; "depicts ... in a manner patently offensive with respect to minors, an actual or simulated sexual act or sexual contact, an actual or simulated normal or perverted sexual act, or a lewd exhibition of the genitals or post-pubescent female breast"; and "taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value for minors." Under the law, any commercial website that posts this material must restrict access to minors under age 17 through the use of credit cards, adult access codes, or digital certificates—or risk prison terms of up to six months and civil fines of up to $50,000 per violation.

The problem is that while dial-a-porn operators and mail-order pornographers can deny their products to customers from states or localities that consider those products obscene, Web pornographers can't. To make sure customers from certain communities can't view their material, websites would have to restrict it for everyone. That's why the Philadelphia court struck down COPA, holding that it would require "any material that might be deemed harmful by the

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most puritan of communities in any state" to be placed behind an age-verification screen. This, the appellate court recognized, would give adults on the Web free access only to material that America's most conservative communities considered fit for children.

But in his troubling opinion last week, Justice Clarence Thomas—joined by Justices William H. Rehnquist, Antonin Scalia, Sandra Day O'Connor, and Stephen Breyer—disagreed. The five justices announced that the possibility that juries in different regions might apply community standards differently wasn't, by itself, constitutionally problematic—even if it required websites to restrict access for everyone. In separate statements, Justices O'Connor and Breyer stressed that in passing COPA, Congress intended to adopt a national standard for identifying material harmful to minors on the Internet, even though different local juries might interpret it in different ways. "A nationally uniform adult-based standard," Breyer declared, "significantly alleviates any special need for First Amendment protection," by allowing national rather than local values to prevail. As long as the nation agreed on what was harmful to minors, Breyer suggested, the material could be restricted across the board.

With characteristic deference to Congress, Breyer assumed the House of Representatives and the Senate were correct when they announced that this national consensus exists. But the evidence from American viewers suggests otherwise. Consider soft-core "teasers"—free pictures from commercial pornographers—many of which are now available without adult verification and which Congress intended COPA to restrict. These are the equivalent of the soft-core girlie magazines that the Court in the 1960s said states could prohibit teenagers from buying unless they were age 18 or over. But it's hard to discern a national consensus that viewing soft-core porn is inappropriate for, or harmful to, 16-year-olds today. On mainstream television, naked breasts are no longer quarantined on late-night, public-access TV stations, as they were when I was a lad in the 1970s. Bare breasts and bottoms can be found on network shows like "NYPD Blue." Some of the most successful shows on HBO are sexual documentaries like "Real Sex," "Taxicab Confessions," and "G-String Divas," a graphic show about strippers. And millions of underage viewers are saturated with sexual images on MTV.

The variety of state laws and jury verdicts on the subject of pornography also shows the absence of a national consensus. Among the 25 states that prohibit the display of material harmful to minors, some prohibit only fully exposed breasts; but a Wisconsin court recently upheld a conviction for exposing a child to a photograph of a woman with her "shirt and jacket open to the waist without exposing her nipples." Given this regional variation, the Supreme Court has long held that asking a jury to apply a national standard for "patently offensive" content outside of the TV-broadcast medium would be "an exercise in futility." At a time when our culture has never been more sexualized, it's hard to fathom why Breyer and O'Connor have now concluded otherwise.

Even more troubling, COPA isn't limited to pornographic *images* online: It encompasses written descriptions of actual or simulated sexual acts that some juries might consider harmful to minors. It's shocking that the federal government is trying to restrict access to text on the Internet—after all, the Supreme Court hasn't allowed the banning of books since the late 1940s. And yet only Justice John Paul Stevens voted to invalidate COPA on these grounds, emphasizing that "because communities differ widely in their attitudes toward sex, particularly when minors are concerned, the Court of

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Appeals was correct to conclude that ... applying community standards to the Internet will restrict a substantial amount of protected speech that would not be considered harmful to minors in many communities."

BUT STEVENS REFUSED to follow his powerful reasoning to its logical conclusion: Namely, if there is no national consensus about what's obscene for children, there's also no national consensus about what's obscene for adults. This means that any application of federal obscenity statutes on the Web threatens to violate the First Amendment because all obscenity laws are based on the no-longer-credible assumption that people can agree on what's obscene. In his decision, however, Stevens clung to the idea that some kind of agreement about obscenity still exists. In a remarkable sentence, he wrote, "The kind of hard-core pornography involved in *Hamling*, which I assume would be obscene under any community's standard, does not belong on the Internet."

This shows how removed even the most liberal justice is from the reality of pornography on the Internet today. The hard-core pornography involved in the *Hamling* case was the kind of material that might have been considered obscene in 1974—the year before Stevens, now 82, was appointed to the Court. The case involved a successful attempt to suppress a satiric collage of photographs portraying heterosexual and homosexual intercourse, sodomy, and masturbation that had been taken from a government report on obscenity. But today, as Frank Rich reported in *The New York Times Magazine* last May, the porn industry—much of it hard-core—generates at least $10 billion per year in revenues for more than 70,000 websites, porn networks, pay-per-view and rental movies, cable and satellite television, and magazine publishers. The 700 million porn rentals per year include, as Rich put it, "a market as diverse as America," including tattooed performers for the college-age crowd, geriatric porn for older viewers, interracial videos that are popular in the South, and outdoor sex for the Sunbelt. Indeed, two years ago, when a local video retailer in Utah was prosecuted for peddling hard-core pornography, he successfully argued that his products were consistent with what his neighbors were watching on pay-per-view.

In other words, consumption patterns reveal Stevens's notion that hard core-pornography is considered patently offensive for adults, in even the most conservative communities in the United States, to be 30 years out-of-date. Unlike the Supreme Court, the porn industry has developed a rating system that classifies material with clinical precision, ranging from x (soft-core) to xx (hard-core) to xxx (ouch!). Now that xxx porn has proliferated across the country—thanks to the Web and to satellite television—the '70s effort to distinguish between the hard-core obscenity in *Hamling*, which could be banned for everyone, and the soft-core pornography in *Playboy*, which had to be protected for adults, has been doomed by the reality of the marketplace. It's no longer possible to argue that hard-core websites are patently offensive to the average American adult, or that soft-core websites are offensive to the average American teenager, since both are enthusiastic consumers.

And Internet porn isn't the only area in which the Supreme Court seems caught in a time warp. On the same day it decided the COPA case, the Court upheld, by a five-to-four majority, a Los Angeles zoning ordinance that prohibited two adult businesses, such as a video arcade and a dirty bookstore, from operating in the same building. The city relied on a 1977 study purporting to establish a connection between adult businesses and higher crime. But as Justice David Hackett Souter pointed out in his dissent, there was absolutely no evidence that combining a video arcade and a bookstore under the same roof caused discernibly higher crime rates than when these partners in smut were forced to disperse. In fact, more recent—and more reliable—studies cited by the First Amendment Lawyers Association refute the claim that adult businesses are associated with higher crime at all. But even some of the liberal justices consistently refuse to evaluate the dubious empirical evidence concerning the harmful secondary effects of pornography with a critical eye. In a surprising decision two years ago, for example, Justice Breyer joined the three conservatives in upholding a Pennsylvania ban on nude dancing. In what Justice Stevens called a "titanic surrender to the implausible," the Court accepted the city's preposterous claim that requiring exotic dancers to wear pasties and a G-string might reduce the illicit "secondary effects" of nude dancing, such as violence, prostitution, and sexual harassment.

THE TRUTH IS that the Supreme Court's entire approach to pornography and obscenity has become a titanic surrender to the implausible. In the '60s, at the dawn of the sexual revolution, the Court struggled valiantly to preserve Victorian definitions of obscenity that relied on some kind of moral consensus about what kind of sexual depictions were beyond the pale. But in the twenty-first century, for better or worse, this moral consensus has collapsed—both at the local and the national level, for adults and teenagers alike. As a result, Congress and the Supreme Court are forced to justify their efforts to regulate porn by invoking the hypothetical possibility of secondary effects—such as harm to minors or the prevention of crime—that aren't remotely borne out by the available evidence.

Many people disapprove of the explosion of porn on the Internet and understandably want to protect children from it. But in an age when community values have fractured, the law is too clumsy an instrument to regulate sexual expression on the Web. Happily, there are technological alternatives that recognize the diversity of contemporary American values while respecting privacy and free expression. As a bipartisan commission reported to Congress two years ago, increasingly sophisticated Internet filtering mechanisms allow individual parents to decide what kind of material they consider appropriate without imposing their views on others. If the Court continues to believe it can precisely calibrate American morality when it reviews COPA in the future, it may unleash a wave of federal censorship that will have little impact on the proliferation of pornography but could wreak havoc on the Internet as a raucous marketplace for free speech. ■

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Can John Kerry make people like him?

The Makeover

By MICHAEL CROWLEY

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

IT IS THE comic beauty of presidential politics that someone like John Kerry, a Boston aristocrat and U.S. senator known for self-important statesmanship, is forced to spend his Friday night in this downtown Columbia municipal parking lot. Local Representative James Clyburn has assembled 200 people on the oil-stained first level of a multistory garage to gorge on greasy whitefish with Wonder Bread served on paper plates. R&B music blares, and, while the acoustics are horrendous, the beer-swilling crowd happily grooves as the deep fryer sizzles away. Wearing a light-blue cotton shirt tucked into khaki pants, Kerry glad-hands his way through the crowd, his six-foot-five-inch frame easily located by the head of thick salt-and-pepper hair that floats above the throng. His visit here, for the South Carolina Democratic Convention, is the first of many he's sure to pay to the state that will host the first Southern primary of the 2004 Democratic presidential campaign.

But there is intrigue afoot. North Carolina Senator John Edwards, one of Kerry's chief rivals for the 2004 nomination, has arrived, looking sharp and at ease in a red golf shirt. A buzz goes through the crowd. Edwards is the man of the moment, having just been dubbed "the next Bill Clinton" by *The New Yorker* and "a perfect politician" by *Vanity Fair*. In perfect form, he even managed to upstage Kerry's arrival in town that morning—thanks to a fortuitously timed story on the front page of the Columbia *State* "revealing" that Edwards is, in fact, a native South Carolinian (a fact he downplays back home).

Which is why Kerry fans are delighted to see the two men on stage together with Clyburn later in the event. As they stand side by side beneath a dreary exit sign, Kerry looms over Edwards by several inches. He also overwhelms his adversary rhetorically. After Edwards delivers some brief and subdued words to the crowd, Kerry whips them up with a furiously ideological stem-winder that makes Edwards grimace as if he were suffering a sudden migraine. Afterward there is much speculation that Edwards was irked at having to share the stage with Kerry, not least because of their striking height difference—a difference Kerry's backers love to dwell on.

It's a small, perhaps petty, triumph. But these days the Kerry camp will take whatever it can get. For, in a sense, Kerry is the anti-Edwards. Where Edwards has become the darling of the national media, Kerry can't seem to catch a break. His press clippings record 18 years of journalistic wisecracks about his ego, his looks, and his self-promotion. The word "aloof" comes up constantly—51 times in the same sentence as Kerry's name, according to a Nexis search. "He is widely derided as aloof and arrogant," *The Boston Globe* has said. "Kerry ... has been called brooding and aloof," informed *USA Today* in 1996. "Some critics call him aloof. One political observer characterizes him as 'a frozen piece of fish,'" CNN snickered that same year. Nor is this view limited to the media. "To be president, you've got to have charisma and personality, and I just don't see that in him," says one Democrat who has known Kerry for years. Moreover, whereas many strategists consider Edwards the party's best hope for carrying culturally conservative Southern states, Kerry is branded a Massachusetts liberal—a stuffy elitist who stands no chance of winning over Johnny Paycheck. "When you get right down to it, he's a liberal from Massachusetts," says a veteran Democratic consultant who admires Kerry. "The big question with Kerry—and nobody can answer it—is electability." Another Democratic strategist agrees: "I don't know if he's John Connally"—the former Texas governor who spent $11 million to win one GOP delegate in 1980—"or if he's real."

Several unbiased people who know Kerry well insist he's a stronger candidate than the CW suggests. He is, after all, a decorated Vietnam War hero, a prolific fund-raiser, and a proven campaigner. And while he may not be a bona fide moderate, his record tacks more to the center than a casual observer might assume. But Kerry's nightmare is that the "can't win" talk will become self-fulfilling. And with Democratic contenders engaged in a furious "invisible primary" for money, operatives, activists, and free media, he can't afford the derision and dismissals much longer.

So Kerry is attacking the frozen-fish factor head-on, launching an aggressive effort to reintroduce himself to the public as a centrist, a veteran, and, most importantly, an all-around likable guy. Don't call it a repackaging, his advisers say—they're just revealing the inner John. "We don't have to invent a person; we don't have to change a person. We have to reveal a person," says one top Kerry operative. And Kerry himself agrees. "I haven't really reached out to or met a lot of people in the press until the last couple of years," he says. "And I think people are now sort of having the opportunity to get to know John Kerry." Kerry's advisers are crossing their fingers that when people do, they will like what they see. It won't be easy. At the Columbia fish fry, a Democratic activist watched Kerry, plastic cup of cheap beer in hand, work the crowd. "It's the rebranding of John Kerry," he cracked. "That arrogant jerk you've heard so much about is really just a regular guy."

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KERRY DUTIFULLY PRETENDS to be worried about his reelection to the Senate this fall. But he has no serious opponent, and he's already drenched in 2004 sweat. Over the past year Kerry has traveled to every significant primary state. In just the first three months of this year he raised $1.2 million, leaving him with $3.2 million in the bank—more than any other prospective Democratic candidate. He has set up the first political action committee (PAC) of his 18-year Senate career. He has hired marquee fund-raisers and strategists, with the promise of even bigger names to come. And his staff makes little secret of his ambitions: In contrast to his prospective rivals, the people around Kerry don't challenge the premise of questions that refer to his candidacy in the present tense. "He's a busy bee out there," assesses Al Gore's 2000 campaign manager, Donna Brazile.

The very fact that Kerry is so obviously running for president is, to some, a perfect illustration of the character flaws that make it impossible for him to become president: a degree of personal manifest destiny and self-love rare even among politicians. Indeed, his biography suggests an almost lifelong grooming for power. A descendant of the plutocratic Forbes clan (Forbes is his middle name), he is the son of a diplomat who was stationed in Europe for much of Kerry's boyhood. He was schooled in Switzerland before going on to the elite prep school St. Paul's and then Yale. Even as a young man he had a reputation for intense ambition; in 1971 he was devastatingly lampooned in a "Doonesbury" comic that depicted him singing to strangers the virtues of a man named John Kerry—without revealing that he was John Kerry himself. Wealthy for most of his life, in 1995 Kerry married Teresa Heinz, the widow of Pennsylvania Senator John Heinz and heiress to a fortune of nearly half a billion dollars. And he evinces a distinctly self-indulgent streak. Kerry speeds around on a motorcycle and in a convertible, Rollerblades and wind surfs, and plays classical pieces and Broadway show tunes on his guitar. Feeling introspective two years ago, he told *The Boston Globe* that he might like to become an artist someday.

If the broad contours of Kerry's biography suggest vanity and opportunism, it's easy to find details that support that impression. As a young man he conspicuously signed his name "JFK." During his famous antiwar testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1971, Kerry seemed to affect a Kennedy-esque accent. Early in his career he had surgery on his chin—a medical procedure, he said; gossip columns called it a cosmetic adjustment. Kerry filmed some of his own combat exploits in Vietnam, a decision a friend explained to the *Globe* with the words, "John was thinking Camelot when he shot that film, absolutely." And perhaps most notoriously, the medals he threw onto the Capitol steps at an antiwar protest were later revealed not to have been his own, but those of other veterans. (Kerry's were in a desk drawer at home. He did, however, throw the ribbons that came with his medals and says he never claimed the other medals were his.) It's also hard not to notice, when visiting Kerry's office, that his computer-desktop image is a picture of, well, himself.

In the Senate, Kerry's detractors call him arrogant, hyper-ambitious, and overbearing. Kerry may often be the smartest

ROBERT RISKO

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man in the room, they say, but he feels the need to prove it with long-winded monologues. It hasn't helped that Kerry has preferred the high statesmanship of foreign policy to more mundane domestic affairs, and showy investigations—such as those into POW-MIAs in Vietnam and the BCCI banking scandal—to legislative grunt work. In provincial, ribald Boston, many local pols loathe Kerry's high-minded inattention to parochial issues and sensibilities. When Kerry showed up late at a traditional St. Patrick's Day political roast a few years ago, the master of ceremonies joked that Kerry had gotten "stuck in front of the mirror." "In that world you're either a backslapping pol, or you're aloof and arrogant," says Michael Meehan, a former longtime Kerry aide.

IT IS NO exaggeration to say that Kerry has made ditching the latter label the primary focus of his early presidential campaign. In recent months he has sought to turn himself into the most accessible straight-talker since John McCain. When he attended the Florida state Democratic convention in April, for instance, Kerry stood out for his relentless schmoozing of reporters—which included an off-the-record dinner that was so well-attended that some reporters couldn't find seats. Kerry also pleases the media with sharper anti-Bush-administration sound bites than his more cautious presidential rivals. And he makes himself extremely easy to reach—in fact he's liable to hunt you down. When a TNR colleague left a message with Kerry's press office recently, the senator personally called him back a few minutes later—although the reporter hadn't even asked for an interview. And when Kerry does give interviews, rather than spout the stentorian bromides for which he has been known in the past, he is blunt and to the point—and quick to go off the record for the kind of juicy inside talk that thrills reporters.

I got a glimpse of the "new" Kerry in his "hideaway" office in the U.S. Capitol Building recently, where he enjoyed a lunch of Dean & DeLuca sushi. Offering contrition for his "old" ways seems to be a key part of Kerry's strategy. "When I first got into politics I was quite brash, and I made some mistakes," he admitted. "I didn't care enough about politics.... I think through the years I've been a very different person.... I think people who get to know me know I love to go out and hack around, have fun, laugh, and have a good time. I am very sensitive to the notion of not being highfalutin." In fact, Kerry is nothing if not self-aware about his problematic reputation. "I'm a tall guy, I've got a big shock of hair, I've got this angular sort of Yankeeish-looking face, and it's a serious sort of presence. And I think people look at that and say, 'Oh gee, he went to Yale, and he's got a lot of money,' and so they try to put a label on it."

At times he may be a little too self-aware. Like when Kerry wound up on a Capitol elevator with Senator Wayne Allard, a Republican from Colorado. The two men are hardly close friends, but when Allard stepped onto the elevator with another man (who turned out to be Allard's brother), Kerry was quick to whip up some banter. "How are ya, Wayne?" he asked, inquiring about Allard's reelection campaign and generally revving into high-bonhomie gear. When Allard introduced his brother, an accountant, Kerry was fast with a one-liner: "Not for Arthur Andersen, I hope!" As the men stepped off the elevator and headed down a hallway, Kerry walked between them, his long arms stretched across their backs, wisecracking all the way. After the men went their separate ways, Kerry looked pleased. "That," he said with a proud grin, "was an example of my 'aloofness.'"

THE OTHER MAJOR rap on Kerry is ideological—that he's an unreconstructed, Northeastern liberal in the Kennedy tradition. On several defining issues, Kerry is to the left of many of his potential Democratic rivals. He opposes the death penalty in nearly all cases; he has repeatedly backed tougher gun control; and he voted against the use of force against Iraq in 1991. And he is a hard-liner on the environment: Last month he led the charge to kill the Bush administration's plan to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and before that he unsuccessfully pushed for higher fuel-efficiency standards in the Senate energy bill.

But Kerry's record is more complex than his critics admit. He was a strong supporter of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings balanced-budget act, which demanded spending cuts to trim the deficit in 1985. ("That was heresy back in Massachusetts," he says.) In a 1992 speech at Yale, he infuriated African American leaders with a prescient warning that white resentment was jeopardizing affirmative action. When Republicans seized Congress in 1994, Kerry pronounced himself "delighted" by the shake-up. And in 1998 he delivered a memorable broadside against the American public education establishment in which he called for radical reforms of teacher certification and tenure and even flirted with vouchers. Says Will Marshall of the centrist Progressive Policy Institute, "I never saw him as an undiluted liberal."

Kerry's follow-through has sometimes been less convincing than his rhetoric, however. When his 1992 comments on race sparked a backlash from civil rights groups, he quickly retreated. (When I asked him about the subject, Kerry responded, "I support affirmative action. I support affirmative action," almost before I had finished the question.) And on education, Kerry has been noticeably quiet since his 1998 speech. He introduced a bipartisan reform bill a few months later, but the New Democrats leading the education reform push in the Senate—including Joe Lieberman and Evan Bayh—thought it too weak and proceeded with their own legislation; Kerry's measure went nowhere. During last year's education reform debate, Kerry had a seat at the table at important New Democrat meetings, but his role was limited. "Perhaps he's been a little tougher in rhetoric than in substance," allows an influential New Democrat.

Ultimately, though, Kerry doesn't answer charges that he's an out-of-touch liberal with references to legislation; he answers them with Vietnam. For Kerry, the war is a kind of ideological silver bullet, one his supporters consider particularly valuable after September 11. After Republicans attacked Tom Daschle for allegedly questioning Bush's handling of the war on terrorism a few months ago, the Senate majority leader retreated. Kerry, however, escalated: "Let me be clear tonight to Senator [Trent] Lott and to Tom DeLay: One of the lessons that I learned in Vietnam—a war they did not

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have to endure—and one of the basic vows of commitment that I made to myself, was that if I ever reached a position of responsibility, I would never stop asking questions that make a democracy strong." When I asked Kerry whether he worries that Republicans might find a way to use that old footage of Michael Dukakis riding absurdly in a tank against him, he grew defiant. "If they want to put up an image of Mike Dukakis in a tank," Kerry replied, his eyes narrowing, "I'll put up an image of me on a boat in Vietnam."

And Vietnam isn't only an answer to Kerry's ideological vulnerabilities; it's an answer to his characterological ones as well: Out-of-touch, selfish rich kids didn't risk their lives in the jungles of Vietnam. Speaking before the South Carolina Democratic faithful in a dreary ballroom last month, Kerry introduced his former boatmate David Alston:

> He sat up in a turret above my head in the pilot house—firing twin fifty-calibers to suppress enemy fire from ambushes. We were extremely exposed—always shot at first.... On one occasion in an ambush his turret was riddled with almost one hundred bullets penetrating the aluminum skin. This gunman kept firing even though he was wounded—one bullet going through his helmet, grazing his head and another hitting his arm....

Apart from McCain, no other possible presidential candidate can tell a story like that. Nor will they be able to air campaign ads like the rough Kerry biography video I saw, which shows vivid footage of PT boats speeding through Vietnamese jungle rivers, as a narrator recounts tales of Kerry's heroism. The words "courage and character," which sound like a slogan we'll be hearing more of, were repeated several times. As South Carolina Senator Fritz Hollings put it, in a glowing introduction at the state party convention, "John Kerry volunteered for combat, while George W. got an 'in' to the National Guard and got lost down in Alabama for over a year."

Vietnam has also helped Kerry bond with McCain, whose kind words never hurt anyone accused of effeteness. McCain has been helpfully pumping up Kerry to reporters of late, most recently by blurting out, "John Kerry for president," at a Capitol Hill luncheon. Kerry and McCain grew close while working together on the select committee investigating POW-MIAs in 1992. "John Kerry handled the chairmanship of that committee with tremendous skill and sensitivity," McCain says. "He did, in the view of one and all, a not grandstanding or self-aggrandizing job.... I think he would seriously be viewed in the top tier [of presidential candidates] for a whole variety of reasons."

And there's reason to believe that, like McCain, Kerry will be able to use his comfort with veterans to cross ideological and cultural divides that other politicians can't. Indeed, it is in their company that he most effectively puts questions about his vanity and inauthenticity to rest. At a veterans' memorial event in Columbia last month, a crew of ragged-looking former soldiers turned out to lay a wreath at a Vietnam War memorial and to present Kerry with a framed poem written by one of their own. After the event, I encountered Steve Dock, a short, tattooed man with a potbelly and a long white ponytail, smoking a cigarette alone in the parking lot. Dock wore a camouflage T-shirt that read, "PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN" and a floppy green hat bearing the words "TUNNEL RAT." He seemed to me like a deeply jaded man, and if there's a type of veteran inclined to hate John Kerry for protesting the war, I thought he would be it. Instead, Dock told me that Kerry "spoke well" and had left him impressed. ("Just 'cause we're in the South don't mean we're all rednecks," he added.) As we were talking another veteran, by the name of Frank Bender, walked up. "You won't understand this," Bender said, "but when he received that poem, he got a look that we all understood. Senator McCain got that same look. You know he's the real deal."

SO THERE MAY yet be hope for John Kerry. It's certainly likely that, after all, he will win the New Hampshire primary, thanks to his obvious geographic advantage—one enhanced by the fact that his reelection race this fall gives him an excuse to advertise heavily in the Boston media market, whose airwaves conveniently penetrate much of southern New Hampshire.

Kerry should also be well funded. Because he never accepted PAC money, he's spent years building a network of the small-dollar donors who will be critical under campaign finance reform. He has the benefit of a strong fund-raising team led by Robert Farmer, the legendary finance director of Dukakis's campaign. He has also signed up California venture capitalist Mark Gorenberg, who raised scads of Silicon Valley dollars for Bill Bradley in 2000 and pulled in $250,000 for Kerry in one weekend last year. And should it come down to it, there's always his wife's fortune.

And he will have top-tier political talent. He has already signed on Jim Jordan, a savvy strategist who now directs the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, and he is expected to land Michael Whouley, an old ally who served as Gore's national field director in 2000.

But good mechanics do not a victory make. Just ask Phil Gramm, another high-profile senator who cockily promised to raise $40 million in preparation for a 1996 White House run ("I have the most reliable friend you can have in American politics, and that is ready money," he liked to boast)—only to discover that no amount of money could sell voters on a homely, cranky Texas conservative. Gramm, however, never really tried to revise his image. And Kerry is engaged in a determined, even frantic, effort to do just that.

To wit: On the way to his office recently, Kerry was disembarking from a subway car that runs underneath the Capitol Building, when he spotted a slogan on the sweatshirt of the heavyset, young black woman driving the train. Though these conductors work all day in the presence of famous politicians, they rarely interact. Kerry, however, saw this cultural chasm as an opportunity to practice his charm skills. "Viva La Diva!" he boomed, pronouncing each word on the sweatshirt as if for the first time. "Are you a 'diva'?" he asked. Apparently not sure what to say, the woman nodded her head. "You'll never live that down!" Kerry exclaimed triumphantly. As he walked away, he paused to reflect. "Diva," he mused. "That's the new deal, I guess." Whether John Kerry can become the new deal himself remains to be seen. ■

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Troubled Marriages

I FIRST SAW Diane Lane in 1972, when she was about seven years old and appeared in André Serban's Off-Broadway production of *Medea*. Lane was one of the children killed by their mother. The audience did not see the murders, but before the play, as we filed along a corridor to the theater, we went past the children, who were costumed and were chanting verses. I can still see the golden-haired little girl.

Well, time passes, even for golden children. Now Lane is appearing as Connie, an errant wife, the mother of a nine-year-old boy, in **Unfaithful** (20th Century Fox), and the film is chiefly worth seeing for her performance. The screenplay by Alvin Sargent and William Broyles Jr. gives Lane the best screen role of hers that I have seen, and, as usual, good roles bring out the best in good actors. A key element in this role is that the wife is well-married, with a devoted husband and a son dear to her. Instead of being miserably or boringly married, Connie is part of a thriving family organism. Thus her infidelity is not compensation. She is simply, starkly, struck by a bolt of glandular lightning.

This family lives in a New York suburb; their quasi-manorial house is the first thing that we see. This shot sets the base from which the story will move. One day Connie comes into Manhattan on some errands and is down in SoHo when a violent windstorm whips up. She collides with a young man, Paul, who is carrying a pile of books: she is knocked down and her knee is bruised. He lives nearby (of course) and invites her up to have her knee tended to. Paul is (of course) very good-looking, cultivated, and French. And he is a book dealer, so his apartment is crammed with culture, in itself an aphrodisiac. In the course of not much time, only a few days, the affair begins.

The plot is so patent that it would verge on the parodic if it weren't for Lane. She becomes a woman absolutely drugged with passion, struggling earnestly to keep up connubial appearances as she plunges into her new emotional being. The best directorial/editing touch in the film is the way that the first sex with Paul is treated. Connie is in his apartment soon again and, after a show of reluctance, is swept into his arms. Cut. We next see her on the commuter train going home as, in flashes of flashback, she remembers the past few hours. Avoiding the expected long scene of explicit sex, the film gives us instead the conflict in her between seething memory and resumption of her wifely self. Lane's combined intoxication and unease in this sequence could go into the files of acting schools.

But the film is schismatic. The subject changes. The focus of the story moves from Connie to her husband Edward, played by Richard Gere, and becomes much less interesting—worse, much less credible. The change, I suppose, must not be disclosed; but I can say that the plotting is so full of holes that Edward's dilemma becomes remote, as if we were watching a structure being built and could only wonder why the builders were making so many mistakes. The screenplay is based on Claude Chabrol's *La Femme Infidèle* (1968), which I remember liking, but I do not remember it well enough to note where this adaptation went off the rails. In any case, when Gere becomes central in the film after Lane has heated it up, he lowers the temperature with a rote performance. As for Olivier Martinez, who plays Paul, he supplies the necessary ingredients for this stock role, including three-day stubble.

Adrian Lyne, who directed, made the second *Lolita*, which skimmed along where the first version delved. Lyne also made *Fatal Attraction*, about an errant husband; that film and *Unfaithful* might be viewed as a His and Hers set. (I have never seen a windstorm in New York as drastic as the one that—with heavy symbolism—sends Connie into Paul's arms. And at home when she leaves a room in which Edward is working, she accidentally-symbolically turns off the lights on him.) The editor, who keeps the picture mobile, is the extraordinary Anne V. Coates, now seventy-seven, whose career ranges from *Lawrence of Arabia* to *Erin Brockovich*.

But it's the declaration of Lane's full talent that is most memorable here. Prodigal Hollywood, waste it not.

A sobering experience but not a novel one. Recently New York had its first TriBeCa Film Festival, a weekend in which more than one hundred fifty films were shown, most of them new and some of them shorts. There were a few revivals, among which was a restored print of **The Hired Hand** (Universal). This exceptional film was released in 1971 in fifty-two theaters, as compared with the two thousand-plus theaters that most Hollywood pictures open in. After two dismal box-office weeks, it was withdrawn and, despite its success in Europe, disappeared. Lately, with the help of the Martin Scorsese Foundation and others, the negative was recovered and an excellent print was made.

This second viewing reinforced and expanded my opinion of it. *The Hired Hand*, a Western, is, unostentatiously, a work of mythopoesis. The hero, played by Peter Fonda, is riding west to California with another man and a young fellow. Fonda had abandoned his wife and child seven years ago because he wanted to break free. The young fellow is killed. Fonda sickens of his Western quest and goes back to his farm, accompanied by his friend (the redoubtable Warren Oates). The film then deals with the way he is treated by his staunch, weathered wife (Verna Bloom) who does not weep into his arms but treats him in the manner of the independent person she is now. She makes him become her husband again.

What underlies Fonda's role is the transformation of the frontier imperative, the Frederick Jackson Turner belief in the frontier as the great American catalyst. Here the "free" male, recognizing the solipsistic quality of his behavior, returns to responsibility—and a changed era. Maleness is no longer synonymous with physical adventure but with inner maturity.

I remembered this idea in the film, but another important element had been underprized by me: the characterization of the wife. When the returned husband hears gossip about her sexual behavior during his absence and confronts her with that gossip, she denies nothing. In a response that may have been startling even as late as 1971, she affirms her right to live as she pleased, to bed whomever she wanted, when she was left alone—forever, as she thought. Solely responsible for her life, she has lived it as she chose. Part of the transformation of the "Western" pattern in her husband is his acceptance of this view, and his acceptance rests

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on Bloom's admirable quiet selfhood in her role.

The screenplay is by Alan Sharp; the director was Fonda himself (convincing in this job as in his performance); the cinematographer was Vilmos Zsigmond; the editor was Frank Mazzola. They all collaborated to pitch this film in the sheer elements of earth and water and sun. The editing is enriched with cross-fades and impositions that help to transmute the narrative into myth. Fonda was at the TriBeCa screening, as were Bloom and Mazzola, and all three of them said, with considerable justice, that their film was ahead of its time. Perhaps some sensible distributor will release it again. Anyway, this restored version is on DVD.

But my gratitude for this second viewing was tinged with melancholy. How quickly the film world, with disregard of merit and distinction, buries its past. ■

The Gambler

By JAMES WOOD

Dostoevsky: The Mantle of the Prophet, 1871–1881 by Joseph Frank

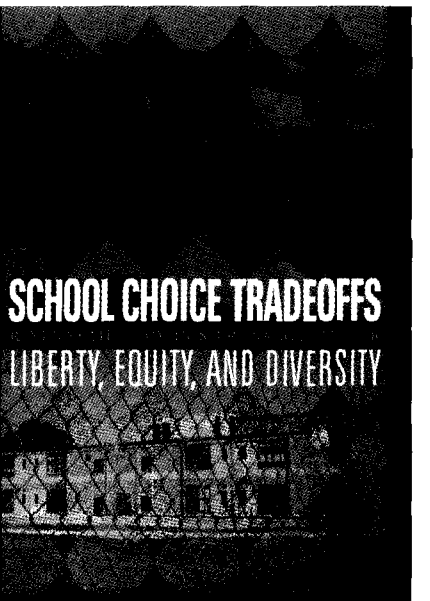
(Princeton University Press, 784 pp., $35)

I.

THE WORLD OF "the slap": everyone knows that this is Dostoevsky's world, his "underground" world of humiliations, affronts, jousts, and slights. When, in *The Possessed* (1872), the repulsive revolutionary Peter Verkovhensky visits Kirilov to tell him that he has murdered Shatov, and Kirilov says, "You've done this to him because he spat in your face in Geneva!," we know that we are deep in the underground, profoundly enwebbed, and we know that this spider's psychology is something new in literature.

Consider a few scenes. The narrator of *Notes from Underground* (1864), the underground man, is one day in a tavern, when a powerful soldier, an officer, blocked by the narrator, picks him up and moves him out of the way. The narrator is humiliated to have been treated so lightly, and cannot sleep for fantasies about how he will revenge himself. The officer walks every day down Nevsky Prospect. The narrator follows him, "admiring" him from a distance. He decides that he will walk in the opposite direction and that when the two men meet, he—the narrator—will not give an inch. But day after day when the moment of physical encounter arrives, he weakens, and moves out of the way just as the officer strides past. At night he wakes up obsessed with the question: "Why is it invariably I who swerve first? Why precisely me and not him?" Eventually he does manage to hold his ground, the two men brush shoulders, and the narrator is in ecstasies. He goes home singing Italian arias, feeling properly avenged. The satisfaction, of course, lasts only for a day or two.

In *The Eternal Husband*, a brilliant novella published in 1870 (just before the opening of this final volume of Joseph Frank's extraordinary biography of the writer), a cuckolded husband named Pavel Pavlovich, whose wife has recently died, travels to Petersburg in order to torment his wife's former lover Velchaninov. He does indeed torment the lover, not least because the lover does not know for sure whether the husband ever knew about the affair. Pavel Pavlovich visits Velchaninov's apartment again and again, teasing and punishing him by withholding the real secret. Does he know of the affair? In typical Dostoevskian fashion, however, revenge curdles into a sour love. It transpires that the cuckolded husband is really in love with his wife's former lover. He cannot leave him alone, and his "torture" of him oscillates wildly between expressions of admiration, cringing humility, and savage resentment. The former lover decides that the husband came to Petersburg in order to kill him. He came to Petersburg because he hated him. But the lover decides that the cuckolded husband loves him too, "out of



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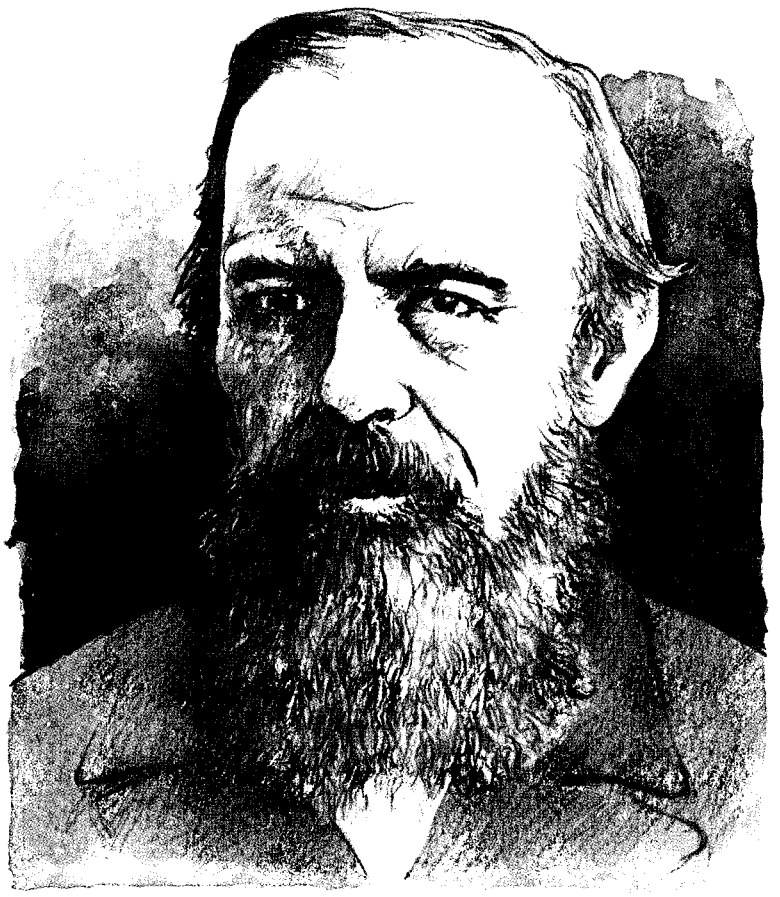
spite," which is "the strongest kind of love." At the end of the book the two finally part. The former lover holds his hand out, but the husband cringes away from it. The lover, with derision and insane pride, says: "If I, if *I* offer you this hand here... then you might well take it!"

And, finally, a scene from *The Brothers Karamazov*, written in 1878–1880, the last years of Dostoevsky's life. Fyodor Pavlovich, the old head of the Karamazov family, a clown, a buffoon, and a malefactor, is about to enter a dining room at the local monastery. He has already acted scandalously in the cell of the saintly old monk Father Zosima. Fyodor decides that he will act scandalously in the dining room, too. Why? Because, he thinks to himself, "it always seems to me, when I go somewhere, that I am lower than everyone else and that they all take me for a buffoon—so let me indeed play the buffoon, because all of you, to a man, are lower than I am." And as he thinks this, he remembers being asked once why he hated a certain neighbor, to which he had replied: "He never did anything to me, it's true, but I once played a most shameless, nasty trick on him, and the moment I did it, I immediately hated him for it."

There is a dark novelty in all this, for sure. But what does it consist of? It is not merely that such characters are, as Dostoevsky believed the Russian soul to be, very "broad," capable of confusing and unpredictable swervings, full of abysses. Nor is this simply a display of what Stendhal called, in *The Memoirs of a Tourist*, the modern emotions, "envy, jealousy, and impotent hatred." (Stendhal is a mere gardener in Dostoevsky's underground, a genial above-grounder by comparison.) Nor is it only what is commonly called *ressentiment*. Rousseau may have come closest when he talks of the new inwardness being the replacement of old categories such as virtue and vice with the modern malaise of *amour-de-soi* and *amour-propre*. For pride and the deformations of pride are unwashable habits for all but the holiest of Dostoevsky's characters. The underground man, the cuckolded husband, and Fyodor Karamazov all seem to act in ways that are against their interests, and what marks their newness, their modernity as fictional characters, is that they do so again and again without cease, and that they do so, as it were, theoretically: they act like this because their interest is really the maintenance of their pride. (By theoretical, I mean not that Dostoevsky's interest in psychological oddity is abstract, but that it is philosophical: *The Eternal Husband* has indeed a whole chapter of psychological exegesis titled "Analysis.")



Fyodor Dostoevsky by Jack Coughlin for The New Republic

When we think of typical Dostoevskian action, we surely think of a bewildering mixture of haughtiness and humility coexisting in the same person, each element oddly menacing. The underground man, that anti-bourgeois banshee, alternately ingratiating and screaming with fury; and Peter Verkhovensky, hateful and dominating to his subordinates, but sheepish and adoring with his hero, the child-rapist Stavrogin; and Smerdyakov, the real killer of Fyodor Karamazov, an illegitimate servant who is horrible to his adoptive father but slyly humble before the Karamazov men. And it is not only the menace of pride but also the comedy of pride that reverberates throughout Dostoevsky. Comedy is not always associated with Dostoevsky's name, but nothing is funnier in *The Possessed* than the proud, weak governor, Andrei von Lembke, who is being manipulated by Peter Verkhovensky. As the local mayhem mounts, the governor loses his control. He shouts at a group of visitors in his drawing room, "That's enough!" and marches out, only to trip on the carpet. He stands still for a moment, looks at the carpet, says aloud, "Have it changed!" and walks out.

Dostoevsky shows us that pride and humility are really one. If you are proud, you almost certainly feel humbler than someone else in the world, because pride is an anxiety, not a consolation. And if you are humble, you almost certainly feel better than someone else in the world, because humility is an achievement, not a freedom. Pride, one might say, is the sin of humble people and humility is the punishment of proud people; and each reversal represents a kind of self-punishment. Thus Fyodor Karamazov enters the dining room ready to abase himself because he disdains everyone else. This sort of logic is hard to find, at least as an explicit psychology, in novelists before Dostoevsky. One has instead to consult the religious weepers and gnashers—Ignatius of Loyola, or Kierkegaard—to encounter anything like it.

But Fyodor enters the dining room, as the underground man walks toward the officer, and as the cuckolded husband comes to Petersburg, for another reason: because he needs other people in order to confirm himself. The underground man admits this; he calls himself "a retort man," a man who comes "not from the bosom of nature but from a retort." This "dialogism" was most influentially noticed by Mikhail Bakhtin, who posited it as the fundamental principle of Dostoevsky's work. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin observed:

> What the underground man thinks about most of all is what others think or might think about him; he tries to keep one step ahead of every other consciousness, every other thought about him.... At all

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> the critical moments of his confession he tries to anticipate the possible definition or evaluation others might make of him ... interrupting his own speech with the imagined rejoinders of others.

Thus the many pairings, or doublings, in which one character revolves around another, and each is murderously dependent on the other: Peter Verkhovensky and Stavrogin, Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov, Ivan Karamazov and Smerdyakov, Velchaninov and Pavel Pavlovich. In Fyodor's case—and perhaps it is always the case with any colossal egotism—other people appear to have become himself. He dislikes his neighbor because of something that he, Fyodor, did to him: "I once played a most shameless, nasty trick on him, and the moment I did it, I immediately hated him for it." Clearly Fyodor longs—however buried the original religious sentiment—to punish himself, because he hates himself. But since other people have merged with him, he punishes himself by punishing other people, and hates himself by hating other people.

And this leads to a Sisyphean repetition of behavior. Self-punishment of this twisted kind means being condemned to re-enact scandal after scandal without cease, because each self-punishment has become indistinguishable from sinning. The sin itself has become the punishment for that sin, and each sin, being another act of outrage, just opens the wound again. Clearly there is no way that Fyodor Karamazov could ever stop behaving badly to his neighbor, since there is no logic by which he could possibly begin to feel warmly toward him. He would have to like himself, and *that* is not going to happen.

ONE CAN GO further than Bakhtin, subtle as he is. The really remarkable aspect of Dostoevsky's celebrated psychology is surely that it is deeply sophisticated and wise in theoretical and human terms, but also that it can be finally understood only in religious terms. His characters, even the very godless ones such as Fyodor Karamazov, live under the mottled shadow of religious categories. They are the most complicated modern, secular agglomerations of unconscious motivation and conscious masquerade ever created, and yet there is nothing in Dostoevskian motivation that cannot be also found in the Gospels. They are humbly proud and proudly humble (Mary Magdalene). They sin in order to punish themselves, and know in advance that they will do so (Peter). They doubt in order to be reassured (Thomas). They betray in order to love (Peter, Judas).

Above all, their actions are comprehensible only and finally as efforts to confess, to reveal themselves, to be known. A tiny scene in *The Brothers Karamazov* comes to mind. Katerina Ivanovna, Dimitri Karamazov's fiancé, has taken Grushenka's hand and is kissing it. Grushenka is Dimitri's mistress. Unexpectedly she extols Grushenka, who appears to bask in the praise. Grushenka takes Katerina's hand, as if to reciprocate—and then she unexpectedly drops it: "And you can keep this as a memory—that you kissed my hand and I did not kiss yours." Katerina calls her a slut, and has her ejected from the house. When one has gone through all the "psychological" explanations, when one has burrowed into all the corridors of dialectic, a stubborn inexplicability remains. Why act like this? What is furthered? Grushenka seems to want to annihilate herself.

The only explanation is religious. Grushenka, like so many Dostoevsky characters, wants to be known, even if she is not aware of it. She wants to reveal herself in all her dirtiness, in all her baseness. She wishes to reveal herself as hateful, proud, bitter, little. She wants to confess, and to be called a slut. The underground man desires, really, not to avenge himself but to reveal himself to the officer. After all, to let people know what you think of them is also to let them know what you think of yourself. This is the crucial point at which secular psychology meets religious mystery. *The Brothers Karamazov*, which would be the consuming work of Dostoevsky's last years, and wins nearly one hundred fifty pages of commentary from Joseph Frank, is concerned precisely with the feebleness of psychological explanation in the face of the oddity and extremism of religious motivation.

II.

THE FINAL VOLUME of Joseph Frank's magnificent biography opens in 1871, as Dostoevsky returns to Russia after four years abroad. Frank touches quickly upon the earlier years: Dostoevsky's involvement with radicalism and socialist utopianism in the 1840s, which had led to his arrest in 1849 and his mock-execution (apparently a little joke of the czar's) at the Peter and Paul fortress; his penal servitude in Siberia, from 1850 to 1854; the writing of *Notes from Underground*, and *Crime and Punishment* in 1866; and the dictation, in one month, of *The Gambler*, to a stenographer, Anna Grigorievna, whom he married in 1867. Frank repeats the emphasis that he has made in earlier volumes on the centrality in Dostoevsky's life of his four years in Siberia. He was doubtless never an atheist—Belinsky said years earlier that whenever he mentioned Christ, the expression on Dostoevsky's face changed, "just as if he were going to cry"; but he became a devoted reader of the Gospels in Siberia. A copy of the New Testament lay under his pillow for four years.

In the prison camp Dostoevsky felt that he discovered the essence of the Russian peasant, and this knowledge funded his later religious nationalism and xenophobia. The Russian sinner, he declared years later, knows that he has committed wrong, while the European is untroubled by his sin, and indeed accepts it as justified. "I think that the principal and most basic need of the Russian people is the need for suffering, incessant and unslakable suffering." Yet the Russian attempt at self-restoration will be "always more serious than the former urge to deny and destroy the self." In *The Brothers Karamazov*, he will have Dimitri, charged with murdering his father and facing twenty years of labor, exclaim in prison to his brother Alyosha: "It's impossible for a convict to be without God.... And then from the depths of the earth, we, the men underground, will start singing a tragic hymn to God, in whom there is joy! Hail to God and his joy! I love him."

BUT IF DOSTOEVSKY had changed, so had Russia when the novelist and his much younger wife returned in 1871. The serfs had been liberated ten years before, and Russian radical thought, which in the 1860s had followed Chernyshevsky's idea of "rational egotism," and which had exploded into the violent ruthlessness of Bakunin and Nechaev (the model for Peter Verkhovensky), was becoming gentler and broader. Political thought was still divided between the generally conservative Slavophiles and the more radical Westernizers; between those who felt, like Dostoevsky, that Russia needed to offer its own solutions to its own problems, and those who, like Turgenev, saw Europe as the beacon that would illuminate a backward nation.

In the last decade of his life, however, Dostoevsky discovered that Russian radicalism was not only the secular Westernizing kind. There was a new strain, which, while never exactly Christian, seemed sympathetic to certain Christian values. These were people who, without orthodox faith, were yet willing to suspend themselves in the oil of the religious. Some of the Populists began to see the rural Russian way of life as treasurable, unique. Dostoevsky, who was conservative but never ideologically pinioned in one place, was not automatically anath-

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ema to these new Christianized radicals. Both Dostoevsky and some of the Populists began to envision the transformation of society along the principles of Christian love, charity, and selflessness. This was keenly pleasing to Dostoevsky. Once, perhaps, he had believed in the socialist eschatology of a graspable earthly utopia; but his reading of the Gospels had encouraged him to believe that socialism was a kind of blasphemy, an earthbound mimicry of an inimitable divine mission.

Socialism "is also Christianity, but it proposes that it can succeed with reason," Dostoevsky wrote in his notebooks in the early 1870s. Christianity—and here Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard converge—was not reasonable. It was perhaps a kind of lunacy. It existed not on the bread of reason but on the yeast of faith. The true Christian transformation, Dostoevsky believed, would happen at the end of time, and not by human will. The true Christian, said Dostoevsky, would say to his brother: "I must share my possessions with my brother and serve him in every way." But the "communard" only "wants to take revenge on society while claiming to appeal to higher goals."

THERE IS PROBABLY no living biographer more adept than Joseph Frank at drawing intellectual family trees and turning them into forests. In page after page and volume after volume—this is his fifth and final one—he has devotedly elongated the affiliations and connections, the fraternities and masonries, of Russian intellectual and literary life, and in so doing has made luminous a world that for many of us was obscure. His enormous biography is misnamed, because it is really a scholarly commentary on the extant texts—letters, journalism, notebooks, and the great fiction. The mode of inquiry is utterly empirical. There is no fantasizing, hypothesizing, or fictionalizing. Joseph Frank does not "interview" his subject somewhere on Nevsky Prospect over blinis. Psychology—ironically enough, given the subject—is cut back to a shrub of mere suggestion.

By marshalling a huge population of ancillary texts, Frank mobilizes his subject, makes him speak and be spoken to; and we have been taught, over the years, how to be Frank's delighted audience. This is obviously one of the great, clarifying intellectual adventures of the age. Out of hundreds of examples of Frank's calming erudition, I will offer one. In *The Brothers Karamazov*, Grushenka, Dimitri's mistress, tells a peasant fable, which Dostoevsky had himself heard from a peasant. A heartless old woman, who has never done any kindness to anyone, dies, and her guardian angel, anxious to keep her from hell, remembers that she had once pulled an onion from the ground and given it to a beggar. When God is told of this, he tells the angel that he should hold out the onion to her in the pit, and if she holds on to it and is pulled out, she can ascend to heaven. But when the other sinners see her being pulled out, they hold on to her, too—and she kicks them, saying: "It's my onion, not yours." The onion breaks, and she falls back in.

Dostoevsky loved this tale as an expression of the natural brotherhood and communitarianism of the Russian peasant. He wrote to an editor, proudly, that in his novel "it is recorded for the first time." Speaking out of the quiet vaults of his learning, Frank murmuringly corrects his subject: "Here he is mistaken. A Russian folklorist had printed a very similar legend in 1859." And a hovering numeral, the guardian angel of scholarship, flies us to the appropriate reference at the back of the book.

YET FOR ALL this dense commentary, a vivid portrait of the writer emerges. Those unfamiliar with Frank's earlier volumes may be surprised to find how devoted a husband and father Dostoevsky was. After his death, his wife modestly blacked out the erotic yearnings that he expressed in his letters to her. From the status accorded the suffering child in his work, one might well infer that he was a loving father. But Dickens (whom Dostoevsky deeply admired) used children in rather similar ways in his novels, and still managed to abandon his wife and children. Frank writes movingly of the pain felt by both parents when their three-year-old son Aleksey (Alyosha) died from a prolonged epileptic fit in 1878. The couple could not return to the apartment in which he had died. Dostoevsky, wrote Anna in her reminiscences, "was crushed by this death. He had loved Aleksey somehow in a special way, with an almost morbid love." In *The Brothers Karamazov*, of course, the avowed hero is the saintly Alyosha (the diminutive of Aleksey), and Ivan's great image of senseless suffering is the child in pain.

Dostoevsky, perhaps, already looked crushed. A few years before, in 1873, when he was made editor of *The Citizen*, a weekly journal, a twenty-three-year-old member of the journalistic staff named Varvara V. Timofeyeva had described Dostoevsky: "Very pale—with a sallow, unhealthy paleness—who seemed tired and perhaps ill ... with a gloomy, exhausted face, covered like a net, with some sort of unusually expressive shadings caused by a tightly restrained movement of the muscles." He told Timofeyeva that "the anti-Christ has been born ... and is *coming*." And he spoke of the Gospels: "So much suffering, but then—so much grandeur.... It's impossible to compare it with any well-being in the world!"

FRANK'S DEEPLY ABSORBING account of this last decade is really a story of unworldliness, for all that these are the years when Dostoevsky became a social "prophet." As Frank makes clear, until the publication of *The Brothers Karamazov*, whose monthly installments "held all of literate Russia spellbound," Dostoevsky was most famous for his *Diary of a Writer*, a monthly publication of sixteen pages, in which he gathered together stories, polemics, replies to his critics, and journalistic commentary on Russian news items such as the latest sensational court case. In the diary, he developed his growing Russian nationalism, in which he saw Russia messianically rescuing the rest of the world by bringing about the union of all Slavs, a mere prelude to a worldwide reconciliation of all humans under Christ, a Christ kept alive only by the true church, the Orthodox Church. There was wild anti-Europeanism, anti-Catholicism, and anti-Semitism in this journalism.

Still, the practical political remedy was becoming more and more ethereal—more religious. Even as Dostoevsky immersed himself in the debates of his country, his politics were thinning into Christological mist. He would tell querulous correspondents, again and again, to turn to Christ, to pray, to love one another, to ask for forgiveness. He pondered more and more deeply the life and the teaching of Saint Tikhon Zadonsky, a mid-eighteenth-century Russian monk, who influenced his portrait of Father Zosima in his last novel. Tikhon taught, in Frank's words, "that humankind should be grateful for the existence of temptation, misfortune and suffering because only through these could humans come to an acknowledgement of all the evil in their souls." (Frank speculates plausibly enough that Dostoevsky may well have taken these words to be a response to the problem of Job, with whom Dostoevsky had been obsessed from an early age.)

Inwardly, Dostoevsky was preparing himself for the religious transfiguration for which he argues so movingly in his last great novel. For his fifty-eighth birthday, in 1879, Anna gave him a large photographic reproduction of Raphael's Sistine Madonna. "How many times [have] I found him in his study in front of that great picture," she later wrote, "in such deep contemplation that he did not hear me come in."

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III.

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV, for all its "dialogism," represents a vast Christian exhortation. In *The Possessed*, one of the revolutionary socialists, Shigalev, announces his plan of social transformation. To our ears, it is a nightmare out of Orwell. One-tenth of humanity will have unlimited freedom and unrestricted powers over the remaining nine-tenths. These unfortunates must give up their individuality and be turned into a herd of identicals. Peter Verkhovensky, of course, exclaims that Shigalev has "invented equality," an equality in which "everyone belongs to all the others, and all belong to everyone. All are slaves and equals in slavery." To this horrid vision, *The Brothers Karamazov* again and again poses a true Christian equality, in almost identical language (this similarity is oddly missed by the usually all-seeing Frank): Father Zosima tells his fellow monks that they are "guilty before all people, on behalf of all and for all, for all human sins." Later in the novel, when Dimitri Karamazov is falsely accused of killing his father, he offers himself as a scapegoat. He accepts punishment, he says, because he wanted to kill his father and might well have killed him, and is therefore willing to be "guilty before all." The forced enslavement and the forced equality of Shigalev's proto-communism has been replaced by the willing enslavement and the ecstatic equality of Christian penitence.

The Brothers Karamazov tells the story of the unstable and passionate Karamazov family, gentry in a miserable provincial town dominated by a monastery. The hated patriarch Fyodor is murdered, and suspicion falls on Dimitri, who had visited the house at the time, and who had emerged covered in blood and apparently three thousand rubles richer. In fact, Fyodor was killed, as we discover late in the book, by his atheistic skulking servant Smerdyakov, who is a kind of devil-figure. But each of the three brothers, Dimitri, Ivan, and Alyosha, had at one time imagined the murder of his father. Dimitri had attacked Fyodor and had several times threatened to kill him; Ivan, an atheist who believes that in a world without God and immortality "everything is permitted," appears to countenance killing Fyodor when he meets the murderous Smerdyakov and informs him that he will be away from the house for a certain period. Certainly Smerdyakov takes Ivan's comment to be an official approval. Even the saintly Alyosha, who had been a monk in training at the monastery, admits that he has imagined murder.

The novel, like *Macbeth*, explores the sense that to have imagined a crime is to have already done it. Macbeth, recall, is changed—his mind is "full of scorpions"—at the moment that he hears the witches' prophecy. Nothing can be the same again. Both works of art live under the shadow of Jesus's unfair and even repulsive admonition that to have looked on a woman with an adulterous heart is to have committed the act. It could be said that all of Dostoevsky's characters, in their febrile determination to turn ideas into action, behave like people who have heard Jesus's warning, who deeply believe it, and yet are deeply evading it. The novel seems to come to the conclusion that indeed, as Father Zosima puts it, all are guilty before all. Dimitri, who is fallen, noble, Christ-obsessed, and who has the zeal of the converted sinner, accepts this guilt, and though he professes his actual innocence of the crime, goes willingly to be punished for it.

Yet are not some more guilty than others? Dostoevsky firmly believed that without faith in God and belief in immortality, nothing restrained man's worldly behavior. Without God, everything is permitted. This is an obviously flawed conclusion: a mere glance at world history shows that with God everything already was permitted. (The Crusades, the Inquisition, burnings at the stake, wars, Christian anti-Semitism, and so on.) Gibbon famously thought that the conclusion might go the other way—that a world without religions might well have been a

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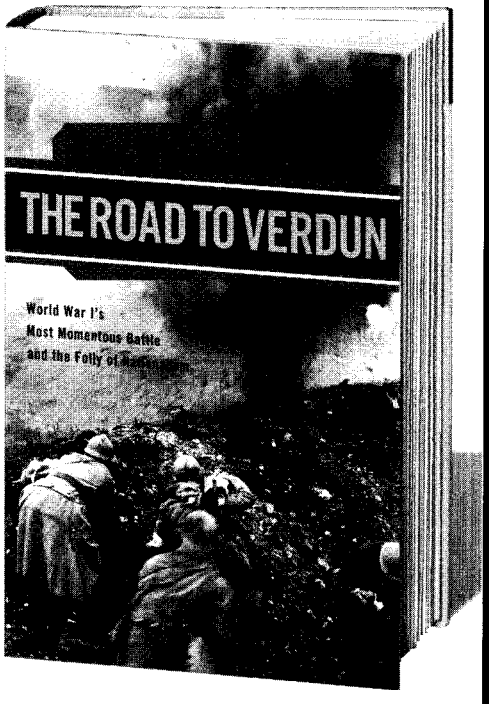

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sweeter place. But Dostoevsky had already written a novel, *Crime and Punishment*, which demonstrated what might go wrong in a man without the Gospel; and here he is at it again in *The Brothers Karamazov*. For although Dimitri and Alyosha have imagined Fyodor's death, and are in some respects "guilty," it is the atheist Smerdyakov, influenced by the atheist Ivan's teaching that "without God everything is permitted," who actually killed the old man. And Smerdyakov is really Ivan's twisted double. Ivan, who has his own nobility, would never have killed his father, but in a sense his idea did the deed, via Smerdyakov. An idea is the killer. Atheism did it.

THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV is a book in love with, and afraid of, ideas. In the end, I think, it proposes the peace of a realm beyond ideas: paradise. This is best seen in the novel's most famous chapter, Ivan's "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor." Just before he tells this story to the believer Alyosha, Ivan attacks God for allowing to exist a world in which children suffer. Ivan is one of those atheists who stands on the rung just below faith; he is an almost-believer, and Dostoevsky clearly admires him. In such a man, unbelief is very close to belief, just as in many of Dostoevsky's other characters love is close to hate, punishment to sin, buffoonery to confession. Religion, Ivan says, tells us that in a future paradise the lamb will lie down with the lion, that we shall live in harmony. But "if everyone must suffer in order to buy eternal harmony with their suffering, pray tell me what have children to do with it.... Why do they get thrown on the pile, to manure someone's future harmony with themselves?" He continues: "I absolutely renounce all higher harmony. It is not worth one little tear of even that one tormented child. They have put too high a price on harmony; we can't afford to pay so much for admission. And therefore I hasten to return my ticket."

He gets Alyosha, the true Christian, to agree with him. If one could build "the edifice of human destiny with the object of making people happy in the finale, of giving them peace and rest at last, but for that you must inevitably and unavoidably torture just one tiny child ... and raise your edifice on the foundation of her unrequited tears—would you agree to be the architect of such conditions?" Alyosha says that he would not. But, replies Alyosha, there is Christ, who can "forgive everything, forgive all *and for all*."

To which Ivan responds with his now famous legend. It, and the preceding chapter, are deservedly revered. The writing races on a thousand legs and finally takes flight. It has the ferocity, the august vitality, the royal perspective, of scriptural writing. It is, truly, visited prose. In the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor, Christ is upbraided for allowing humans too much freedom. Humans do not want freedom, says the Inquisitor to Christ, humans are afraid of freedom. They want, really, to bow down to an idol, to subject themselves. They have no desire to live in the freedom to choose between good and evil, between doubt and knowledge.

IN THESE TWO chapters, Dostoevsky mounts perhaps the most powerful attack ever made on theodicy (the formal philosophical term for the effort to justify God's goodness in a world of evil and suffering). In particular, Dostoevsky challenges the two chief elements of theodicy: that we suffer mysteriously on earth but will be rewarded in heaven; and that evil exists because freedom exists—we must be free to do good and evil, to believe in God or not to believe in Him. Any other existence would be robotic, unimaginable. In this scheme, Hitler must be "allowed" to have existed. To the first defense, Ivan says that future harmony is not worth present tears. And to the second—to my mind even more devastating—Ivan says, in effect, "why is God so sure that man even wants to be free? What is so good about freedom?" After all—Ivan does not say this, but it is implicit in his speech—we will probably not be very free when we get to heaven, and heaven sounds like a nice place. So why are we all so ragingly and horribly free on earth? If there are no Hitlers in heaven, why should it have ever been necessary for there to be Hitlers on earth?

Dostoevsky did not invent these objections, of course. They are as old as rebellion. Moreover, he knew that theodicy has always been incapable of an adequate response to these hostilities. He merely gave them the most powerful form in the history of anti-religious writing. And this is why many readers think that the novel never manages to escape these pages, that the Christian Dostoevsky, in allowing such power to anti-Christian arguments, really produced not a Christian novel but an unconsciously atheistic one. The philosopher Lev Shestov thought that Dostoevsky, for all his orthodoxy, was so corroded by doubt that when he came to imagine the doubter Ivan, he could not help giving him a vitality and appeal far beyond the saintly and bland Alyosha. Those of Shestov's mind think that even if the novel demonstrates that atheism is finally a murderous idea because it kills Fyodor, religion is so damaged by Ivan's onslaught that it cannot mount a proper reply.

Yet Dostoevsky very much wanted to reply to Ivan's attack. He worried that Father Zosima and Alyosha would not be what he called, in a letter to an editor, a "sufficient reply" to "the negative side" (the atheistic side) of his book. Well, can there be a reply to Ivan's arguments? Alyosha says what any Christian must say: that Christ forgives all of us, that he suffered for us so that we may not suffer, that we do not know why the world has been constructed the way it is. Depending on our beliefs, we will find this adequate or inadequate.

BUT DOSTOEVSKY'S NOVEL enshrines, in its very form, a further argument. It is that Ivan's ideas cannot be refuted by other ideas. In debate, in "dialogism," there is no way of defeating or even of matching Ivan, and Alyosha does not really try. At the end of Ivan's legend, he simply kisses his brother. The only way in which we can refute Ivan's ideas, the book seems to say, is by maintaining that Christ is not an idea. Socialism is an idea, because it is "reasonable"; atheism, too. But Christianity, so profoundly unreasonable—what Kierkegaard called "lunacy"—is not an idea. The painful part is that the only realm in which Christ is not an idea, in which he is pure knowledge, is in heaven. On earth, we are all fallen, and we fall before ideas, we have only ideas, and Christ can always be kicked around the ideational playground.

But Christ is not an idea. This is surely the only way to explain the intellectually incoherent behavior of Dimitri, who, though innocent, is willing to be guilty for all and before all; or of Father Zosima's equally extreme advice that we should ask forgiveness "even from the birds"; or of Alyosha's final words, which close the book, that resurrection does indeed exist: "Certainly we shall rise, certainly we shall see, and gladly, joyfully tell one another all that has been!" Such notions have really fallen off the cliff of ideas and into the realm of illogical, beautiful, desperate exhortation. Belief has smothered knowledge. And this exchange—of the unreason of Christianity for the reason of atheism—means finally that there can be no "dialogism" in this novel, either of the kind that Bakhtin proposed, or the kind that Dostoevsky so ardently desired. There is neither a circulation of ideas nor an "answering" of atheism. For the answer—the unreason of Christian love—no longer belongs to the realm of worldly ideas, and thus no longer belongs to the novel itself. It truly exists in Paradise, and in that other, finally un-novelistic book, the New Testament. ■

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The Bear Hug

By STEPHEN KOTKIN

The Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy by Strobe Talbott

(Random House, 480 pp., $29.95)

IMAGINE THAT UPON assuming office, a new president appoints campaign contributors and assorted pals to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the regional military commands, and the military attaché posts in American embassies abroad. Ridiculous, right? Of course; but this is business as usual at the State Department or on the diplomatic side of embassies. Military expertise is nothing to trifle with, but statecraft—well, here professionalism seems not quite as important as cronyism. The loyalty of an intimate friend, remember, is steadfast. (As opposed to, say, the loyalty of career officers?). Thus do we encounter the spectacle of the fortuitously rich and the former fraternity brothers, innocent of foreign languages and of any experience of foreign policy, running American embassies around the world and departments at Foggy Bottom.

Strobe Talbott, though, was a crony with a difference. He was a friend of the president, but he was also an expert. Talbott has had one of those hard-knocks paths to power so characteristic of the American meritocracy: the Hotchkiss School in Connecticut; Yale; a Rhodes scholarship at Oxford, a special internship at *Time* magazine's Moscow bureau during the heyday of superpower rivalry; a tap on the shoulder to translate Nikita Khrushchev's sensational memoirs, and a byline at *Time* under the patronage of Henry Grunwald, whom Talbott might have succeeded as editor had it not been for the election of his erstwhile Oxford housemate (from Arkansas) to the presidency. Notionally, as Talbott might say, his column in April 1992, in which he defended Clinton's draft dodge, did precede the president's invitation to join the administration, but the summons would have been forthcoming anyway. Maybe it's the white shoes.

To serve as ambassador to Moscow, Clinton first asked Walter Mondale, then he turned to retired Admiral William Crowe, and finally to Talbott. All declined. (Mondale held out for Tokyo and Crowe held out for London.) Talbott writes in his new book that he then suggested Condoleezza Rice for Moscow, implying that the national security aide of the outgoing administration would have no difficulty supporting the Russia policy of the incoming administration. In any event, the post went to Thomas Pickering. Talbott got the newly created post of ambassador at large for the twelve former Soviet republics (excluding the Baltic states) at the State Department. And so he took a seat at the front of the presidential plane, having previously sat back in the press section when covering Washington. "With the upgrade," he writes, "came a lot of work"—an inadvertent comment on his life as a journalist.

Talbott's hack days serve him well in *The Russia Hand*, which reads smoothly and contains some fine comic moments; but in these pages the diplomat often trumps the reporter. Most of the bile and the West Wing dope has been suppressed in favor of flattery. Talbott enumerates his "debts" to a varied multitude, from Isaiah Berlin to Sandy Berger and other colleagues and experts. Talbott acknowledges his on-the-job training, and also some mistakes (such as his exculpatory position on Russia's massacres in Chechnya, when he had Clinton invoke the Civil War and compare Yeltsin to Lincoln). He refrains from boasting about his influence with the president, omitting mention, for example, of how he maneuvered Bobby Inman to the top of the president's list to replace Les Aspin as defense secretary. (Inman neglected to disclose background information to the White House and was cut loose.) Compared to the dogma-stuffed memoirs of Igor Ivanov, his last Russian interlocutor at the Foreign Ministry in Moscow, or the treatise of Ivanov's predecessor Evgeny Primakov, Talbott's book comes across as informative.

The conceit of the memoir lies in a focus not on the author but on the presidency, and in Talbott's version of the presidency: not Clinton-Gingrich or Clinton-Starr, but Clinton-Yeltsin. During the 1990s, he writes, Yeltsin and Clinton were "the dominant figures in international politics." How this over-hyped duet came about—between the leader of the richest and most powerful nation and the leader of a suddenly impoverished and enfeebled one—turns out to be a study in mutual neediness, manipulation, and dubious policy, notwithstanding the craft and the courtliness of the author.

ONLY DAYS AFTER Bill Clinton's election to the White House, Boris Yeltsin began imploring him to visit Russia. Anthony Lake, the national security adviser-designate, counseled a refusal, as did George Stephanopoulos, who is singled out by Talbott for having connived to lash the administration to domestic issues. But Clinton seemed intrigued by Yeltsin's entreaties, remarking that "you can just feel the guy reaching out to us, and asking us to reach out to him. I'd really, *really* like to help him. I get the feeling he's up to his ass in alligators." Talbott reports that he prodded the president toward a bear hug, but more generally he wishes his readers to believe that Clinton had a long-standing fascination with Kremlin affairs. Russia is what Talbott and Clinton discussed when they first met in Philadelphia in 1968 at the orientation for Rhodes scholars, and Russia is what they discussed at Oxford when they shared a house and Talbott secretly translated Khrushchev, or "Ol' Nikita," as Clinton then called him.

In the White House, Clinton quickly came to identify with Ol' Boris, a flawed, undisciplined, instinctive politician battling an impeaching legislature and an aggressive media. And so it emerged, a Talbott-Clinton conspiracy: they understood each other, and they understood the historic importance of Russia to the world and to the presidency. When Talbott tried to assert his knowledge of Russia, Clinton interjected: "There's nothing you can out-wonk me on, Strobe, not even on Russia wonkery." So the Russia hand in the title of Talbott's book is not really Talbott. It is Clinton.

Clinton's personal diplomacy toward Russia, Talbott contends, worked like a charm. The key was the discovery that they could exploit Yeltsin. True, the Americans took some time to figure it out, but eventually they grasped a convenient pattern: Yeltsin would throw off American negotiators with bluster at large plenary sessions in front of his own staff, but he would concede everything one-on-one, and then riff wildly at press conferences—not to undo the concessions but to cover up with theatrics how pliant he had been.

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"Yeltsin's desire for the spotlight at high-prestige international gatherings," Talbott writes, "gave us leverage over him on issues where we had run into an impasse with his government." Indeed, "on every major point of contention," Talbott boasts, Clinton proved "able to bring Yeltsin around to a position more consonant with U.S. interests than the Russian political and military establishment favored."

Typically, a fraught Yeltsin would then plead for the United States to show more respect, insisting that Russia was not Haiti, and so Clinton would launch into one of those Southern Comfort Boris-you-are-an-historic-figure speeches, and pressure his subordinates to cough up a little more "aid," and muse about the genuine inspiration that he got from the scrappiness of Ol' Boris. "I've got problems," Talbott quotes the Russia hand as saying, "but nothing like his." In short, Talbott portrays a kind of co-dependency of presidents, but one that worked brilliantly (he claims) to American advantage. Talbott also writes that he counted the glasses that the Russian president downed at dinners: Yeltsin invariably got sloshed, and it looks as if the Americans rolled him like a drunk in an alley. Talbott professes dismay at Yeltsin's drunkenness, but Clinton never returned the contents of Yeltsin's pockets.

SUSPICIOUSLY, TALBOTT DOES not specify when they divined the diplomatic opportunities afforded by Yeltsin's moods, or square it with what they thought they were doing before the light bulb illuminated. But it emerges in the book anyway: Talbott and Company imagined that they were masterminding nothing less than a transformation of Russia. This task had been nominally turned over to the IMF, in a quintessentially 1990s misunderstanding of how successful societies worked; but the fantasy was micromanaged from the White House. Clinton the candidate had criticized George H.W. Bush for not doing "enough" for Russia, and as president he reprimanded his own aides over their stingy "aid" proposals, railing that he didn't want to be "George Bush junior," a political imperative that only grew when Bubba and Boris bonded.

Talbott rightly notes that the policy of guiding Russia's transition by means of IMF loans was supported by Congress, meaning both Gingrich and Dole; indeed, for a time "there was no opposition to speak of." This was too bad, because a farce ensued. Talbott insists that it was Lawrence Summers—then deputy treasury secretary and the real capo of the IMF—who assumed the position of dictating government appointments and policy measures to Russian prime ministers, who tried to remind the American official (Summers) of the existence of the Russian electorate, their parliament, and sovereignty. But "Larry persisted" in administering what Talbott says they called "the spinach treatment": force-feeding the Russians what was supposedly good for them, in exchange for loans at the non-commercial rates of the IMF. So Russian officials promised to follow orders, money was loaned, the "strict" conditions went unmet, and everyone played charades.

Many people were fooled for quite some time. Indeed, in the sheep-eat-sheep world of academia, everyone still obsesses over the IMF loans to Russia and the accompanying neo-liberal reforms, which one side (the right) asserts transformed Russia and the other side (the left) asserts destroyed it. How inconvenient for both sides is the fact that the reforms did not happen. They simply could not have happened, given the entrenched interest groups inherited from the Soviet period that were inimical to the implementation (as opposed to the declaration) of far-reaching neo-liberal reforms.

Eventually American policy-makers, while extending more IMF loans, stopped trying to enforce "conditionality," but not because they understood the inherent constraints. After Russia's parliamentary elections in 1993, when the pseudo-fascist media clown Vladimir Zhirinovsky surprised everyone with a decent showing, a false Weimar analogy ("Weimar Russia") seeped out of the punditry-wonkery swamp, and Vice President Al Gore—who had his own Russia commission yet looms small in Talbott's memoir—leaned on the IMF (that is, on Summers) to go easy. Following suit, Talbott publicly urged "less shock and more therapy," making it seem as if he blamed Russian "reformers" for the apparent efflorescence of proto-fascism. Summers exploded. "Larry's brain was like a tank powered by a Lotus engine: it purred as it rolled over anything in its way," Talbott writes. "Over the next eight years, I was flattened more than once, but I usually found the experience educational."

They both needed an education. Talbott's explanation for what he had really meant to say regarding shock therapy—he wished to advocate the necessity of creating a social safety net—is unintentionally revealing, since many of the Soviet-era social welfare mechanisms, from near-free housing and utilities to padded employment, remained stubbornly in place in those years, and these institutions and customs were precisely what was blocking effective marketization. Meanwhile Talbott's blooper did help to expose the fact that the IMF loans were not about structural reform at all, but about propping up the Yeltsin regime.

THE USE OF loans nominally for economic reform but really for political patronage reached its notorious apogee in 1996, when Yeltsin geared up for re-election, armed with the state budget as well as some IMF cash. Talbott writes that he "agreed" with the "reformers" on the need to re-elect Yeltsin, but he "disagreed" over their unsavory methods. A pity that he neglects to identify the alternative methods to attain a goal for which he insists there was no alternative. Was there really no alternative to Yeltsin short of anarchy and a new cold war? This was the strong-arm line straight out of Yeltsin's re-election campaign. And just how much influence did Yeltsin—who spent the bulk of the 1990s in the hospital—really have over the larger structural processes at work? Consider that Russian regions in which nominal neo-Communists were elected, such as Krasnodar, turned out little differently from regions in which "democrats" were elected, such as St. Petersburg. Each sported a hyper-executive branch dominating the legislature and the courts, and epidemic looting by insiders, and the destitution of the populace. Call it the late Soviet Union, extended through the 1990s.

Moreover, did "support" for Yeltsin really have to mean pursuing very close American involvement in Russia's internal affairs? And how to explain the fact that Vladimir Putin has been implementing—without the "spinach treatment" or the IMF loans—most of what the Clinton administration had tried to impose upon the Yeltsinites? Domestic stakeholders in reforms finally arose, as the Yeltsin era's wild cannibalization of Soviet property and wealth—for *that* is what took place in lieu of reform—cleared the decks and created demand for the measures that Putin has been glorying in. Instead of reflecting on the Putin era's retrospective implications for American policy in the 1990s, Talbott conveys Clinton's regrets in 2002 at not having done "much more" to underwrite the Russian transition to the market! Here is an admission that what the United States did do was insignificant, despite the rhetoric and the contortions of the analysts right and left.

No wonder, then, that Talbott magnanimously gives the "credit" for Washington's role in micromanaging Russia's mirage of economic reforms completely to Summers. He settles scores the gentleman's way. No wonder, too, that Talbott attempts, on behalf of himself and his president, to snatch a strategic victory of sorts from their confusions and their setbacks, by recasting American policy

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toward Russia as the shrewd mugging of Yeltsin. Why did no one notice their policy brilliance at the time?

UNDERCUTTING THE supreme-cleverness skew is Talbott's treatment of the financial meltdown in the summer of 1998, when the Russian government partially defaulted on its debt, and unilaterally awarded a debt moratorium to private interests against their Western creditors, and watched the ruble dive. This piece of work, contrary to Talbott, had little to do with the Asian financial crisis of the previous year, which Russia weathered (some $2 billion in assets were withdrawn, without grave consequences), or with the Russian government's failure to collect taxes (revenues were up, if one counted regional governments, too). The cause, rather, was the flimflam financial system and especially the Russian Central Bank, which through a proxy speculated in dollars against its own currency, failed to remit the law-mandated fifty percent of any dollar revenues to the government account (compared, by the way, to the seventy-five percent mandated remittance for the U.S. Federal Reserve), squandered a hard-currency fortune on its own aggrandizement (grand offices and commercial projects, astronomical salaries and bonuses, interest-free loans to management), protected crony private "banks," and forced the government into default to try to save its own skin.

All this was explained to me in the summer of 1998 by the Russian private citizen Andrei Illarionov (who would become Putin's economic adviser); but the American architects of Russia policy, to save their skins, authorized a new IMF tranche to Moscow that very summer, just weeks before the meltdown. And this money was wired not to the Ministry of Finance, as previously had been the case, but to... the Russian Central Bank! Commingled with other hard-currency reserves, the IMF loans became as traceable as the capital pirated out to Cyprus and other offshore locations (a technique pioneered not by the Yeltsinites but by the Soviet KGB, to funnel money surreptitiously to foreign Communist parties and to buy embargoed Western technology). The American policy-makers who still felt willing or even compelled to transfer billions to Russia in July, 1998 could not have been that shrewd.

Russia's crash mercifully pulled the plug on the wretched era of IMF loans and "conditionality," a debacle that could not be openly admitted in the run-up to Al Gore's presidential campaign. But the ruble devaluation also achieved more for Russia's GDP in a few months than had been achieved in the seven previous years. The collapsed ruble provided a stunningly logical boost to the economy by becoming a de facto policy of strongly encouraging Russian manufacturers (not by the chimera of industrial policy, as the critics had urged, but by the rigor of fiscal policy). Talbott does not bring out all the ironies.

Still, to give him his due, Talbott copiously reports one of the main overall consequences of the Clintonites' Russian policy: the successful inculcation of deep anti-American sentiment. "You know," Andrei Kozyrev, Yeltsin's first foreign minister, told Talbott, "it's bad enough having you people tell us what you're going to do whether we like it or not. Don't add insult to injury by also telling us that it's in our interests to obey your orders." Similarly, Yuli Vorontsov, Moscow's ambassador to Washington ended a forty-seven-year career in the foreign service by remarking: "You know, Strobe, having worked on U.S.-Russian relations most of my career, including during the Soviet period and cold war, I must tell you that it is much easier to be your enemy than to be your friend."

Such comments could be mustered endlessly. Talbott attributes them to the bitterness of the Russians about their precipitous collapse, and he is right. But that is not the whole story. He and other well-intentioned American policy-makers contributed to the deep mistrust. The United States, after all, was not in military occupation of the former Soviet Union, and did not have the leverage (or the depth of commitment) to do in Russia what it had done in postwar West Germany and Japan; and yet the United States acted as if it did, raising expectations and fanning resentments. The United States arrogated to itself—in the guise of the phony multilateralism of the IMF and in the name of democracy—the right to determine the personnel and the policies of a foreign government, because we know what is best. This did little to affect those personnel and policies, but it did help to discredit liberal internationalism.

And what, pray tell, was the "take"? Talbott provides a list of the Clinton administration's accomplishments, all linked to Russia's external behavior: (1) the removal of Soviet-era nuclear missiles from Ukraine—but the crucial agreement involved the cooperation of Ukraine; (2) the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltics—but would this not have taken place anyway? The impecunious Russian government has continued to close bases and withdraw troops from multiple places, including where the

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leases came free; (3) the halting of Russian rocket-parts sales to India—but how consequential (or long-term) was this decision since others, notably Israel, are rushing to fill the profitable gap? (4) Russia's abandonment of Slobodan Milosevic—which must be credited at least in part to his own noxious and erratic behavior—as well as Russia's sanction for the use of force in the Balkans, forthcoming after the American government had suddenly stopped disregarding Russia's possible vital contribution to Balkan pacification and relied on a skilled Finnish emissary; and (5) Russia's acquiescence in the widening of NATO.

It is not a long list. (Talbott might have made more of the hugely successful bipartisan programs for storing and protecting the components of Russia's doomsday complex.) Talbott points out that Clinton met Yeltsin eighteen times—as many encounters as all the presidents from Truman to Bush had with their Kremlin counterparts. And what did the Russia hand have to show for this presidential-heavy diplomacy? Russia's belated help with tin-pot Serbia, and its "acceptance" of something that it could not have blocked: the superfluous addition of non-strategic countries to a defense alliance that has outlived its purpose.

THE EXPANSION OF NATO threatens, above all, to put readers into a coma; but the topic occupies the heart of Talbott's memoir. It was his special bailiwick in the 1990s, and it appears to be a major source of pride. To demonstrate the obstacles that he overcame, Talbott reminds us that "virtually everyone I knew from the world of academe, journalism, and the foreign-policy think tanks was against enlargement." More important, "the Pentagon was overwhelmingly opposed to enlargement." According to Talbott, Defense Secretary William Perry wanted to postpone enlargement "for a decade, or perhaps forever." (It would have been nice to have been told why.)

When Talbott turns to the positive case for expansion, he leaves out the fact that it was Germany that began the push for eastward expansion of NATO, because it was tired of being on the front line. This omission makes the policy seem an American initiative. From the American vantage point, Talbott writes, there were two reasons for the expansion of NATO. The first reason was that we owed it to the Czechs and the Poles for what they endured under communism after Yalta. This may be morally sound; but if the enlargement of the alliance with America was about payback, then we should have started by admitting African countries from which we extracted massive slave populations and where the European imperialists committed unfathomable mass atrocities.

The second reason, Talbott argues, was that NATO expansion helped to nudge the expansion of the European Union—an indirect admission, perhaps, that the really important goal was the aggrandizement of the EU. Note the lack of a claim about increased security, either for the United States or the new NATO members. So much time and energy was sucked away in cajoling Russia to resign itself to its exclusion from the Western alliance—and after September 11 NATO turned out to be unessential, while Russia proved to be more crucial to American security interests than even Talbott had understood.

Conspicuously, Talbott does not dwell upon the argument that NATO expansion carried domestic political significance in the United States. Perhaps this is just as well, since such significance has never been demonstrated. Instead of electoral constituencies, the key domestic factors were an inertial anti-communism combined with professional and ethnic cheerleading inside the government. We can only wonder what American foreign policy would have looked like had the establishment been populated not by Soviet specialists on and émigrés from Eastern Europe or their descendants, but by, say, Japanese, Taiwanese, Korean, or Vietnamese immigrants and their descendants, or Saudi, Iraqi, Iranian, Indian, and Pakistani immigrants and their descendants, or by specialists on all those countries. Would our diplomacy in the first decade after the Cold War have been so fixated on Russia and on expanding NATO?

Talbott narrates in great detail how he toiled to implement enlargement by delaying it slightly, so as to placate the Russians; and how in exchange for Russia's "agreement" he and Clinton were willing to pay the supposedly trivial price of formalizing Russian entry into a G-8. That trade-off met opposition by Lawrence Summers and Robert Rubin, who argued that admitting Russia, with a paltry one percent of world GDP, would violate the rationale and the efficacy of the group. Clinton pressed forward. But Summers and Rubin were right, and for additional reasons: much of the Russian elite is now moving toward appreciation of the need to qualify for admission to international organizations, with the hard effort and the real payoff that this entails domestically, instead of soliciting and receiving bogus exemptions that reward fakery and sloth.

Talbott's portfolio, even before his promotion to deputy secretary of state in 1994, extended beyond Russia, encompassing the entire CIS region, and in a single passage he dutifully remarks on the importance of the many former Soviet republics besides Russia. So important were they that he took what he calls periodic "hello-goodbye tours," that is, trips of "no more than a day or sometimes a few hours in each capital." His sojourns in Russia were longer, but how far he strayed beyond the foreign ministry and a wee group of "reformers" remains unclear. From his memoir, you would not know that Talbott regularly sought advice on many of his official missions to Moscow from Igor Malashenko, then a big news boss at NTV and close to ruling circles. (Malashenko's spoofs of his sessions with Talbott were long a treat.) Talbott does write of one excursion to the Moscow hotel Radisson-Slavyanskaya—known colloquially as the Radisson-Chechenskaya, for the supposed mafia owners—and remarks on the hookers, the casino, and the metal detectors, and also on a meeting there with an old acquaintance, a dispirited former dissident, who soon died at age fifty-seven (the median age for male mortality in reforming Russia). This recollection seems designed to demonstrate how much Talbott knew about what was going on in Russia, and also that he deeply cared, but it may have the opposite effect.

Readers may wonder also about the intelligence to which Talbott had access. Very little of Russian society—its tens of thousands of factory managers and tens of millions of trade union members, its myriad regional officials and institutions—interrupts Talbott's diplomatic narrative

In Your Chair

Who joins the ranks of the beloved dead?
It is easier to love those who have departed,
Who have left the airless rooms the living inhabit
And floated into the unwalled realm of dreams
Than rub against the obstacles of bodies,
Stubborn, opaque. You were sitting in your armchair
Surrounded, almost submerged, by drifts of paper—
Mail, piles of it, and almost all for me.
The heap seemed festive, Christmas-lavish, wasteful.
I fished a letter out almost at random,
Then scurried to the atlas, found the map
So I could show you where I would be going.

Rachel Hadas

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of manipulating Yeltsin or, when he frequently dropped from sight, shopping for other Russians willing to do the American bidding. (They were always found.) The best part of the book is certainly Talbott's report of a high-jinks encounter at Russia's Ministry of Defense over the pathetic Russian dash to the Pristina airport in Kosovo, as well as his initial impressions of a bureaucrat named Vladimir Putin. Talbott, who contrasts Putin's judo to Yeltsin's sumo, writes that Putin "mentioned several times that he believed Russia 'belongs in the West,' and that he had no use for those who thought isolation, retrenchment, or confrontation was an option." This was almost two years before September, 2001.

Talbott comes closest to venting anger when he recalls that during the 2000 campaign Condoleezza Rice—yet another Soviet specialist at the top of our national security establishment—savaged the Clintonites' Russia policy, and called for Russia's "quarantine and containment" rather than integration; and he relishes her about-face since September 11. While she eats crow, he crows that the Bushies are now doing everything that Rice had criticized the Clintonites for doing: courting the Kremlin and of being even more solicitous (dropping the tardy and toothless Clinton criticism over Chechnya); and relying on personal diplomacy, with meetings to create chemistry followed by effusive press conferences.

This drill Talbott perceives as the classic Clintonite one—in truth, it is a tradition that began during Bush I—of getting a weak Moscow to sign on to the American agenda while softening the blows. But the differences are significant. Today's Republicans are not trying to micromanage Russia's internal affairs, and so far they remain ideologically incapable of accepting Russia's strategic importance as more than a necessary evil. If only the American establishment could slice it down the middle: stop patronizing and hectoring Russia *and* stop instinctively wanting to demean and to isolate it as well.

Perhaps the latest Bush-Putin summit proves that we have finally reached this point of intellectual and diplomatic balance. Perhaps not. Putin's Russia verbally disparages American supremacy, even as it (like almost every other country) aspires to a special relationship with Washington. But the integration of Russia with the West will not be accomplished by arms control. It will be brought about solely by the continued deepening of Russia's internal transformation, which must be deep and structural. The hard work must all be done in Moscow, the crucial enticements of the WTO and the EU notwithstanding. The new arms control treaty wrung from Washington resembles the U.S. tax code, obliging no one of importance to cough up anything they do not want to grant voluntarily. The codification of a junior NATO structure to include Russia is a curious matter: the Kremlin is already cooperating fully on the matters that are to be taken up by the council (notably terrorism). Nor is this the first announced "historic" rapprochement between NATO and Russia, yet Moscow has never found members of its military establishment interested in being assigned to NATO for cooperation purposes. Still, in creating a modus vivendi between their states, both presidents are properly struggling to get beyond finessing Cold War institutions, as well as Clinton-era "aid," to a stronger commercial relationship of trade and investment. That means, as in the case of China, sending clearer signals to U.S. businesses and opening wide America's domestic market.

ALCOHOLIC AND INFIRM, Yeltsin nonetheless managed to name his successor. Not so Clinton. Exit Talbott. He is now president-designate of The Brookings Institution, the liberal think tank in Washington, D.C. In a town consumed by intrigues and backstabbing, Talbott's memoir of Washington recounts mostly friendships and loyalties: an engaging civility that carries a whiff of unreality. His book, encompassing eight turbulent years in the capital, describes virtually no betrayals, double-dealings, sellouts, lies, or cover-ups. There are also no reflections—in a book by a lifelong journalist—of the way the media beast does or does not influence policy, and whether getting all the way inside brought surprises or confirmed what he had previously thought as a privileged observer.

Missing, too, is some critical distance and sustained reflection on the United States and its government as a specific culture. We do get abundant glimpses of the absurdities and the frustrations of statecraft, a messy business with endless compromises of principles; agendas upended by events; miscalculation; perpetual crisis management; and at most small victories. No less than in the weakest countries, the foreign policy of the U.S. also results from domestic inanities, and from the sentiments of its leaders and their advisers, such as Talbott or Rice. Talbott's lively and personal account of his tremendous fun in helping run the world is not a revelation on the order of the Khrushchev memoirs that he translated, but a warts-and-all valentine to his charismatic friend of thirty-four years and the clubby circle who shared the author's experience of a paradoxical presidency. ■

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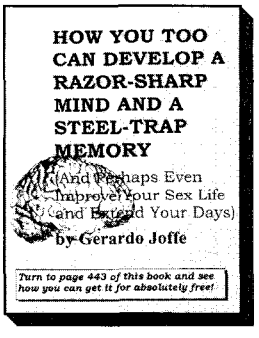

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Freedoms and Fictions

By BENJAMIN SOSKIS

The Bondwoman's Narrative by Hannah Crafts edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr.

(Warner Books, 338 pp., $24.95)

Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown Introduction by Richard Newman Foreword by Henry Louis Gates Jr.

(Oxford University Press, 73 pp., $21.95)

IN JULY, 1849, Ephraim Peabody, a Unitarian minister and moderate abolitionist in Boston, offered the first sustained consideration of the slave narrative as a literary genre. Reviewing four publications, including Frederick Douglass's celebrated *Narrative*, for the *Christian Examiner*, Peabody praised the works as being "among the most remarkable productions of the age," detailing "the native love of freedom in the individual mind." Slave narratives were politically instructive and morally edifying. They were, moreover, great literature: "We know not where one who wished to write a modern *Odyssey* could find a better subject than in the adventures of a fugitive slave," Peabody claimed.

But the Reverend's enthusiasm for this genre affirming freedom was tempered by his concern for the protagonists' lack of restraint. Specifically assailing Douglass's book—which by that time had sold more than fifteen thousand copies and had gone through nearly twenty editions—Peabody worried that the work's "loose, extravagant, and violent declarations" and its "personated passion of the theatre" would alienate Northern readers. Douglass's bold rhetoric might boost sales, but his eloquence also threatened the "practical ends" of moral suasion toward which the slave narrative should be directed.

It was, in sum, a mixed review. And it presaged an uncertainty and a critical precariousness that would preside over the the slave narrative genre, which eventually swelled to include more than one hundred book-length narratives composed before the end of the Civil War. Those "practical ends" that Peabody sought to preserve were themselves somewhat fugitive, evading strict accountings; the narratives' ambitions ranged uneasily between the literary and the propagandistic, the autobiographical and the documentary. In the battle for their countrymen's hearts, it was generally agreed that the smolderings of lived adversity were more effective than the sympathetic recitation of wrongs offered by white abolitionists. But two competing versions of testimony often vied for supremacy in the genre: there was an evangelical model of the slave narrative, in which the truth disclosed was private and the intensity of its presentation was an index of its authenticity; and there was a legalistic model of the slave narrative, in which the truth disclosed was objective, and was bolstered by a dispassionate presentation.

The contest between these two models—it was often a proxy battle in the struggle of black abolitionists for independence from their white supervisors—would largely determine how the narratives would be read and judged, both by their contemporaries and by their modern-day critics. And that contest will certainly continue with the recent publication of two editions of fugitive slave narratives, each with its own claims to exceptionality. Hannah Crafts's *The Bondwoman's Narrative* is, according to Henry Louis Gates Jr., who rescued it from historical oblivion, "possibly the first novel written by a black woman and definitely the first novel written by a woman who had been a slave." A first-person account of a female house-slave's life in bondage and eventual escape from a North Carolina plantation, Crafts's story is deliberately fictionalized, and will likely take up a position on the periphery of the genre, where it will complicate notions of the slave narratives' duties toward verisimilitude. The *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown*, the story of a Virginian slave's fantastic escape to freedom by mailing himself north in a shipping crate, raises vexing issues of authorial ownership. They are welcome additions to an inspiring and troubling community of narratives, not in the least for the new troubles that they bring with them.

THE FIRST QUESTION usually asked about a slave narrative is not the aesthetic one but the historical one: not whether it is good, but whether it is true. (This anxiety about authenticity would attend much of African American art and literature in the years to come.) From the movement's earliest days, abolitionist editors and publishers were concerned about the accuracy of slave testimony, especially since most Northerners assumed that slave life required an expertise in prevarication (and also that those who had managed to escape north were practically selected for their guile). This concern turned obsessive in 1838 with the controversy surrounding the narrative of James Williams, the story of a slave's escape from a cotton plantation in Alabama "as told to" the poet John Greenleaf Whittier.

The *Narrative of James Williams* was the first to be published under the direction of organized abolition, and so it presented an immediate target for proslavery apologists, who attacked it as a complete fabrication. The abolitionists quickly rallied to defend the work, but an American Anti-Slavery Society investigation ultimately concluded that, in fact, "many of the statements made in the ... Narrative were false" and stopped selling it. Williams had moved to Great Britain, and so was unable to defend himself personally. But if abolitionists admitted that some of the specific details were counterfeit, most agreed that the story's general outline, and Williams's charges of cruelty, were accurate. Even so, the anti-slavery community vowed never again to have its credibility compromised.

The Williams affair encouraged the development of an elaborate apparatus of falsification that would accompany slave testimony from then on. In the next few decades, William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator*, the premier organ of radical abolition, published frequent exposés of fugitive slave imposters. In fact, the majority of slave narratives were published only after the former slave had undertaken—and survived—numerous speaking engagements on the abolitionist lecture cir-

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cuit, during which the audience would be encouraged to interrogate the former slave on various details of his or her story. Those that made it into printed form—less than twenty percent, according to the late John Blassingame, a pioneer in the study of slave testimony—were a select bunch. And when they were published, the narratives were chaperoned before the public by multiple introductory statements from prominent white anti-slavery men and women, vouching for the slave's integrity and the narrative's truthfulness.

And yet the commitment to a strict documentation of the evils of "the peculiar institution" was never absolute. Telling the truth did not necessarily mean telling the whole truth, or every truth; it meant telling a truth that made sense to a white audience, with particular racialist preconceptions and literary expectations. Abolitionist editors had to navigate between the prudishness of the reading public and their prurient fascination with plantation sex. And so narratives often offered a few lurid details of miscegenation, but they stopped short of drawing the curtain back completely. The documentation was also circumscribed by what slaves did not know—many narratives begin with confessions of ignorance from slaves regarding their birth dates and their parents' identities—and by what they chose not to tell. Indeed, slaves frequently censored their narratives, refusing to name their actual masters or to describe their routes of escape, for fear of being recaptured or of jeopardizing the chances of those still in bondage.

The commitment to verisimilitude was also complicated by the tensions between the generic, communal truth and the private, personal truth of the narrator. Those who escaped from slavery were often remarkable in some way: many ex-slaves were literate, others had special relationships with their masters or mistresses, and most had passed through extraordinary trials on their way to liberation. As Blassingame pointed out, fugitives wrote more than one-third of all slave narratives, whereas probably less than five percent of slaves managed to escape north. Yet slave narrators were also tasked with polemical and representational duties, often expected to speak in place of their "brethren in bonds." This at times required a peculiar version of Republicanism, in which exceptional representatives were asked to speak for a class of individuals by repressing precisely those characteristics that distinguished them for service. And so, despite the power of the association of literacy with freedom, articulateness, no matter how "authentic" or native, was sometimes discouraged. As one of his white abolitionist peers told the young Frederick Douglass: "Better have a little of the plantation manner of speech than not; it is not best that you seem too learned."

But Douglass was learned, certainly by the standards of his fellow bondsmen; and the narrative that he produced two years later insisted upon that fact. Its publication was a critical moment in the development of the genre, paving the way for the later works of William Wells Brown, Henry Bibb, and James Pennington, among others. For the first time, it became the aim of a narrative to reveal the development of a slave's consciousness and to present to the public a strong black authorial personality, as much as it was to chronicle the details of slave life. The subjective truth, the autobiographical urge, superseded propagandistic or reportorial obligations.

In the last century, the historiography of slave narratives has in many ways tracked the literary developments within the genre. Initially, scholars of the period rejected the narratives as useful historical documents because (as the Southern historian Ulrich Phillips wrote in 1929) "ex-slave narratives in general ... were issued with so much abolitionist editing that as a class their authenticity is doubtful." In the 1960s and 1970s, however, scholars such as John Blassingame and Eugene Genovese insisted that to understand slavery, one had to listen to those who had suffered it. These scholars relied heavily on slave testimonies for their research. They did not ignore the subjectivity of the testimonies; they simply suggested that it was no more vexing from an epistemological standpoint than the subjectivity of slaveholder accounts.

This did not mean that the concern over facticity and authenticity had subsided. Many scholars still spent considerable energy weeding out the unreliable and the ghostwritten accounts from the credible narratives. But increasingly the ex-slaves' subjectivity became less a liability—a narrative impurity to be extracted and neutralized by the rigorous historian—and more the focus of scholarly attention itself. The narrator in the post-slavery present eclipsed his subject, which was the narrated past. The solicitude for the slaves' perspective extended even to untruths, which previously might have been imputed to a foggy memory or a sloppy editor. As William L. Andrews writes in *To Tell a Free Story*, an authoritative survey of the genre, scholars began to view the "fictive elements of black autobiography as aspects of rhetorical and aesthetic strategy, not evidence of moral failure."

Increasingly, the inaccuracies, the elisions, and the equivocations were viewed as deliberate acts of subversion, efforts to assert some control over the past instead of simply recording it. Every narrator became a "trickster," skilled (as the title of one book put it) in "Puttin' on Ole Massa." If Garrisonians once worried that slave trickery would imperil the effectiveness of slave testimony, now that trickery became one of its most ennobling features. And perhaps no scholar has done more to promote the narrator-trickster than Henry Louis Gates Jr., an indefatigable anthologizer and currently the nation's most prolific dispenser of slave narrative prefaces. Gates has, in a way, inherited the role of the white abolitionists whose introductory remarks assured the reading public as to the authenticity of slave testimony.

Gates has a sharp eye for the authentic. A decade ago, while strolling through a New York bookstore, he chanced upon an original copy of *Our Nig* (1859), the first published novel by an African American woman. The novel had been neglected by historians for more than a century, but Gates's attention, and a new edition, secured a place for it in the African American canon. Then last year he struck black gold again, purchasing at an auction a mysterious and enticing 301-page "Unpublished Original Manuscript" about the adventures and the eventual

Kashmir in C>o>n>t<e<x<t

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escape of a young Virginian slave named Hannah Crafts. On the title page, Crafts identifies herself as "A fugitive slave recently escaped from North Carolina," and in a preface she claims that she has simply "relat[ed] events as they occurred."

ALONG WITH SOME other scholars who had seen the manuscript, Gates developed a hunch that Crafts was sincere, and that, despite the confectioned additives of her romantic imagination, the most basic ingredients of her novel were her own experiences. The process of authenticating that hunch makes up much of Gates's lengthy introduction to *The Bondwoman's Narrative*. He sniffs out hints in the text suggesting that the author was African American—for instance, the fact that blackness is often downplayed as a distinguishing characterological feature, as if Crafts simply assumed all her peers were black—and also that the author of this novel was deeply familiar with the story's North Carolina and Virginia locales. Gates retained the services of a professional "historical-document examiner," who dated the manuscript to the period between 1853 and 1861 (the upper bound established by the fact that no mention is made in the manuscript to the Civil War). Gates looked into the history of free black communities in antebellum New Jersey, where Crafts claims to have settled after escaping north (and where an itinerant book dealer purchased the manuscript). But even after sifting through census reports and genealogical records, Gates still does not have a definitive answer about the identity of the novel's author.

The darkness is somewhat dispelled, though, when Gates inquires into "Mr. Wheeler," who is named as one of Crafts's masters in the book. The character, it turns out, was not the author's invention. John Wheeler was an actual slaveholder in North Carolina, and he held several government positions before the beginning of the war. In 1855, one of Wheeler's slaves, a woman named Jane Johnson, escaped during a trip to Philadelphia, thereby becoming a cause célèbre in abolitionist circles. Focusing on a passage in the book in which Hannah claims she was one of the slaves bought to replace "Jane," who had "run off," Gates finally seems to have established some historical traction. And through the use of Wheeler's diary, Gates whittles down the likely dates of Crafts's escape to the months of March, April, or May, 1857.

Unfortunately, there is no record of such an escape in Wheeler's journal; the pages for those months were destroyed by fire. And though Wheeler continued to complain about Johnson's escape years after it occurred, documenting his various attempts to recapture her, he makes no mention of a second escape in the diary's later pages. Without such a reference, the possibility must still be considered that the author's experience with Wheeler's plantation was only secondhand. She might have been a free Northern black who had examined Jane Johnson after her escape.

But Gates is undaunted by scholarly doubt. By the end of his introduction, the tentativeness that accompanied his earlier efforts to identify Crafts has vanished. Gates seems to demand a high level of certitude as the just reward for his detective work, and it would be nice if he could collect it. But the conditions of slave life rarely allowed for such certitude. Like many of the slave narrators themselves, Gates and his readers must resign themselves to a less satisfying level of factual insecurity.

Still, there are indeed many reasons to welcome this book, even if they are not purely historiographical ones. For this novel is distinguished within its genre not only by its priority. The book also helps to relieve one of the peculiar ironies of slave narratives: though the celebration of literacy and the act of writing are central tropes within them, the material evidence of their composition is practically nonexistent. But *The Bondwoman's Narrative* is now the only surviving holograph manuscript of any work of antebellum black literature. As such, it offers a unique opportunity for those studying the period. "[T]o be able to study a manuscript written by a black woman or man, unedited, unaffected, unglossed, unaided by even the most well-intentioned or unobtrusive editorial hand," Gates declares, "would help a new generation of scholars gain access to the mind of a slave in an unmediated fashion heretofore not possible.... [P]erhaps for the first time, we could experience a pristine encounter" with a slave's authentic expressions.

WHEN GRANTED THIS "unmediated" access, however, we find a manuscript, and a consciousness, heavily mediated by the conventions of white nineteenth-century American fiction. When finally we chip away at the interference of whites, we find ... the emulation of whites. As Gates points out, there is a tremendous poignancy in the derivativeness of *The Bondwoman's Narrative*, which represents a slave's efforts to "write herself into and through a canonical tradition to which she aspired for some sort of membership." But in her aggressive stylization, it is hard not to conclude that something of Crafts's own voice has been dimmed, making the encounter a little less than pristine. Crafts has borrowed the fantastic coincidences, the tidy conclusions, and the dominating villains of the sentimental novel; the supernatural portents and ominous landscapes of the Gothic novel; and the class-based burlesques of Dickens. A sharp-eyed graduate student in English pointed out to Gates that in several passages Crafts transposed entire paragraphs from *Bleak House* into her novel, changing only a few key words (the passages are included in an appendix).

Interspersed among these literary borrowings, of course, is a story about slavery. But as was once said of Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, a work to which *The Bondwoman's Narrative* will no doubt be compared, Crafts's novel surrenders itself so completely to the demands of sentimental fiction that its reportorial power is sorely attenuated. The evils of slavery are often peripheral to the perils facing the heroine, or are actually subsumed by those perils, as is the case when Hannah and her mulatto mistress are confined for several weeks to a spacious, well-appointed apartment by an evil lawyer who knows of the mistress's "shameful" lineage.

CRAFTS DOES NOT ignore the hardships of slavery entirely. She includes, for example, an affecting description of the poverty of a field slave hut: "It was reeking with filth and impurity of every kind, and already occupied by near a dozen women and children, who were sitting on the ground, or coiled on piles of rags and straw in the corner." But even in this passage she speaks of the destitution of "these people," as if she is afraid to identify too closely with their squalor (and also as if she understands the tendency of her white audience to collapse all class distinctions when dealing with blacks). Indeed, her descriptive muscle is more often exerted on the interiors of great houses or on bucolic landscapes. As Gates remarks, "Crafts seems to luxuriate in making observations ... that are broad and general rather than specific to the politics of slavery and race."

This is not to say that Gates is ready to reject *The Bondwoman's Narrative* as a source of knowledge about the condition of slave life. He makes much of Crafts's "counterintuitive" claim that the greatest evils of slavery are spiritual and not physical, a standard theme in many other narratives, including Box Brown's. (Crafts writes that "the soul, the immortal soul must ever long and yearn for a thousand things inseperable to liberty.") He points to Crafts's treatment of the close relationships that develop between slaves and their mistresses. ("Those who suppose

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that Southern ladies keep their attendants at a distance, scarcely speaking to them, or only give commands have a very erroneous impression.") And he adduces her frank discussion of the class tensions between house slaves and field slaves. (Crafts decides to run away after her master seeks to force her to marry one of the "vile, foul, filthy inhabitants of the huts.") So it turns out, as Gates says, that Hannah Crafts is a "snob," which is—for all the whitewashing of abolitionist editors and amanuenses—an important historical observation.

BUT IS SHE a trickster? Scholars such as William L. Andrews have suggested that slave narrators chose to fictionalize their accounts because doing so allowed them to confront their masters through reconstructed dialogue. This might make some sense in Crafts's case: there are certainly subversive elements to the plot. The text is full of inversions in which the slave is placed in a position of power over her white overseer. Hannah is made to read to her barely literate mistress. Her mistress, after a freak cosmetic accident, has her face turn black, and complains that her husband prefers Hannah, who is lighter-skinned. And yet the trickster label does not sit well on Hannah, and it will be interesting to see if scholars handle her conformity with the same enthusiasm as her intractability. For she is deeply accepting of white authority in her headstrong emulation of the conventions of contemporary American domestic literature. Indeed, at times her descriptions of slave life seem as if they could have come from a Southern, slavery-as-a-positive-good Calhounite.

In one section of the novel, for example, Crafts describes a kind mistress walking among neat rows of slave huts, where the industrious bondsmen stop their gardening to show their affection: "They all rose with courteous reverence to salute us as we passed, and invited us to walk over their grounds, and gather such flowers as we liked." Crafts has clearly internalized the plantation's moral code, and when she considers running away, she seems deeply troubled by the prospect of betraying her master's trust. Of course, this could be an attempt (like Box Brown's descriptions of his adherence to business contracts) to prove her narrative credibility to the Northern reader by demonstrating her native reliability. But not completely so: both as a character and as a narrator, Crafts seems pulled in opposite directions, between south and north, between the identity that she has been assigned and the identity that she can create for herself. Andrews has described this predicament as one facing the genre as a whole: "By the mid-nineteenth century black autobiographers had learned that they could not serve two masters—the past and the self—equally." And it confronts readers of this narrative as well.

It remains unclear in *The Bondwoman's Narrative* where truth ends and untruth begins. Gates insists both on the work's fictitiousness and on the important insights derived from Crafts's personal experience with plantation life. But though it may confound critics for the moment, that tension between the reported and the imagined, between the generic and the personal, between the collective past and the self-determined present, far from diminishing the novel's worth, is itself perhaps the most valuable idea that this book can impart.

THE *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown*, published in Great Britain in 1851 and never before released in the United States, raises questions of a different sort, if only because it is considerably slimmer than *The Bondwoman's Narrative*, and considerably less ambitious. Brown's narrative has been edited by Richard Newman, a colleague of Gates's at Harvard University who served as Gates's proxy at the auction of *The Bondwoman's Narrative*. The work that Newman has chosen to restore to prominence is actually the second version of the narrative. Brown had first dictated his story to the white Boston abolitionist Charles Stearns two years earlier. According to Newman, however, Stearns's heavy-handed editorializing and turgid, "scolding prose" made it unreadable. (If you doubt that, try chewing on its title: *Narrative of Henry Box Brown who Escaped from Slavery Enclosed in a Box 3 Feet Long and 2 Wide Written from a Statement of Facts Made by Himself. With Remarks upon the Remedy for Slavery.*) As Newman writes of that first effort, with considerably more concision: "It is hardly Brown's book."

The second version was published in Manchester (Brown had fled to England after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850), and it is pruned of the orotund and the intemperate. It is, in fact, a rather elegant little work, now "Written," according to the subtitle, by Brown "Himself." Newman takes that statement at face value, equating austerity with authenticity—an understandable assumption, considering that Brown was likely illiterate. As he writes in the introduction, "Only in England did [Brown] experience the freedom to express himself in his own way." But Newman also admits that it is not clear how the second edition came into being. It is possible that a keen British editor stripped the original version of its ungainly flourishes, with Brown's approval.

Brown's narrative employs many of the conventions of the genre: the traditional slave apologia at the beginning of the text, attacks on the religious hypocrisy of slaveholders, accounts of cruel and dishonest overseers, and refutations of the claim that slaves are better off than free Northern blacks. There are deeply affecting descriptions of the breakup of the slave family—the event that precipitated Brown's escape. Brown tells of watching his wife and children march in chains down the streets of Richmond after having been sold to a slaveowner in North Carolina. He stands with the other friends and relatives of the unlucky chattel at the side of the street until he spots his wife, whereupon he rushes toward her, hoping to share a last goodbye. "I went with her for about four miles hand in hand, but both our hearts were so overpowered that we could say nothing," he writes. Much of the book is also taken up with demonstrating Brown's commercial integrity in the face of the unscrupulous business dealings of his white acquaintances. What distinguishes Brown's book, though, is its incredible, though brief and uninflected, conclusion, involving one of the most impressive and celebrated escapes in American letters.

On March 29, 1849, Brown had himself shipped from Richmond to Philadelphia—three hundred fifty miles and twenty-seven hours away—in a crate. The box was three feet wide, two and a half feet high, and two feet deep, with only a few small gimlet holes for air. Though it was clearly marked "This side up with care," Brown spent considerable amounts of time—on horse-cart, train, and steamer—traveling upside down. "I felt my eyes swelling as if they would burst from my sockets," he writes, "and the veins on my temples were dreadfully distended with pressure of blood upon my head." After a near-catastrophe in which the box is almost prematurely opened, Brown finally reaches Philadelphia, where, after emerging from the crate and announcing that he was "all right," he promptly faints, a free man.

Brown's ingenuity and daring briefly made him one of the most famous fugitives in America. The image of him rising, Lazarus-like, from his box became a staple of abolitionist iconography, appearing in almanacs, children's books, and broadsides. With his narrative, Brown transformed himself into an anti-slavery symbol, a hero of redemption and rebirth, and (as Gates points out in a foreword) of the ability of blacks to utilize the mechanisms of America's commercial "power structure"—a shipping firm and the rail-

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way—for their own uplift. Brown was thereby able to resolve the tension between his exceptional status and his representational duties: his remarkable escape could be applied symbolically to all slaves who yearned for freedom. And his story also suggests the means of achieving such freedom at every slave's disposal. After all, it was Brown's ability to tolerate pain and extreme physical constraints, the basic conditions of slave life, which won him his transit north. Or, as Newman nicely observes, "he made his confinement his liberation."

And so even though Brown displays very little interiority in his narrative, his persona is an impressive one. Soon after his escape, he took on "Box" as a middle name, and began giving anti-slavery lectures in which he would re-enact his escape on stage by emerging out of a crate to begin his presentations. In Great Britain he once had himself shipped in his famous box (which someone had the wit to save) from Bradford to Leeds, a distance of around nine miles, accompanied by a marching band. Perhaps more than any other black anti-slavery agent, Brown incorporated popular entertainment into his delivery, singing a song about his escape adapted from a Stephen Foster tune and traveling with massive panorama, including images of the "Nubian Family in Freedom," George Washington's slave quarters, and two scenes of his own escape.

There is an odd disjunction between the Box Brown of the narrative and the Box Brown of the stage. The former presented himself as a bourgeois family man, who strove for respectability and wanted nothing more than to enjoy the modest gains of his labors with his wife and children. The latter was flamboyant and flirted with the vulgar and the demotic. (And perhaps with more: one associate of Brown's complained that he had taken up with English women, even though he was earning enough money to free his wife, who was still in bondage.) Newman seems to respect both Browns, and to consider the second a canny entrepreneur who appreciated the emotional power of his story, and who employed a sort of middlebrow version of Douglass's "personated passion of the theater." Some of Brown's contemporaries were not as charitable. One British editor took a special dislike to him, and derided the famous fugitive as an "overdressed" and "bejewelled darkey."

Interestingly enough, though several other black abolitionists were in Great Britain at the time, including the prominent William Wells Brown, none of them came to Box Brown's defense. Brown's most famous critic was Frederick Douglass himself, who chided Brown for revealing his method of escape while there were others still in bondage who could employ it. "Had not Henry Box Brown and his friends attracted slaveholding attention to the manner of his escape, we might have had a thousand *Box Browns* per annum," he wrote in his second autobiography. (Douglass did not reveal the method of his own escape until his final autobiography, published in 1881, some forty-three years after it occurred.) In fact, in the year of the publication of Box Brown's first narrative, two other slaves who attempted to escape by shipping themselves north were discovered, and their white accomplice, the same man who had helped Box Brown, spent six years in jail.

Despite the mass appeal of his escape, Brown's place in abolitionism was an awkward one, raising difficult questions regarding the responsibilities of slave narrators, the boundaries between entertainment and advocacy, and the relationship between self-celebration and narcissism. Ultimately, once Brown's novelty wore off, he was unable to sustain himself as an anti-slavery lecturer, and he drifted off into obscurity. Newman makes only passing references to the various rumors surrounding Brown's fate: that he ended up a minstrel, married a white woman, and disappeared into Wales. In fact, Newman approaches the whole subject of Brown's less glamorous later years with a strange passivity. "No one has made a concerted effort to track Brown at this point, but there must be newspapers and civic records that could complete the story," he writes, as if the knowledge of their existence itself should settle the reader's curiosity.

But maybe Newman's reluctance to follow Brown any further does make sense. Slave narratives, after all, are premised on a resolutely linear and heroic plot—from bondage to freedom—that does not leave much room for the subsequent defeats or humiliations of their protagonists. The placement of slave narratives within anthologies as the parent of African American protest literature and autobiography reinforces this consecrated progression from insecurity to self-mastery. And that notion of progression, of pure and exemplary linearity in such lives, is often encouraged by the slave narrators themselves, most famously by Douglass's bold assertion in his first autobiography: "You have seen how a man was made a slave, you shall see how a slave was made a man."

And yet the circularity of that phrase is itself suggestive, betraying the constant challenges to the more simple and edifying linear plot. In truth, the process of self-liberation that the narratives chronicled was rarely completed at the time of their composition. Becoming free resembled not so much a religious conversion as it did a protracted commercial transaction. And so Box Brown's symbolic resurrection from his box was a less faithful representation of his liberation than was his frustrating business interactions with Southern whites. As the genre developed in the 1850s, slave narrators began to devote more space to their struggles in the North, as if expanding slavery's existential boundaries. And the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which required every Northern citizen to assist in the return of an escaped slave, and meant that any free black could be seized with a jury trial, led many abolitionists to conclude that slavery had in fact expanded, and threatened to contaminate the entire nation.

That fear, coupled with an increasing frustration with white abolitionist paternalism and racism, and the recognition of the limited professional opportunities available to them, led many slave narrators to explore, in ways subtle and unsubtle, the incompleteness of their liberation. Of course, the fact that ex-slaves felt secure enough in the ownership of their narratives to express their disillusionment with freedom was itself a movement toward freedom. And scholars have frequently pointed out the "uses of marginality" for blacks in the distinctive perspectives that they gained on the peripheries of both Northern and Southern society. Yet marginality has its costs, and scholars have often failed to recognize them. The power of the trickster is profound precisely because it is limited. When William L. Andrews writes that "to make fun is to make free, at least temporarily," it is that final qualification that stays in the mind.

If some narratives brought their writers fame and relative prosperity, the majority of these works were barely read and quickly forgotten. After all, many ex-slaves took up professional abolitionism or the writing of a narrative simply because they had no other means of income. The tensions within slave narratives between the self and the past, between autobiography and testimony, were reflections of their authors' ambivalent liberation, articulations of a heroism tempered by unheroic realities. Those tensions deserve our attention as well as our respect. For what can be said of Box Brown can be said of slave narrators and slave narratives in general: only by appreciating their confinement can we understand their liberation. ■

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CORRESPONDENCE

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of pragmatism and consensus, Krauthammer endorses the worst elements of contemporary bioethics. Ignoring the insights of great historical thinkers, this field has produced little more than confusion and historical amnesia.

DEREK S. JEFFREYS
Assistant Professor
Humanistic Studies and Religion
University of Wisconsin, Green Bay
Green Bay, Wisconsin

Raising McCain

TO THE EDITORS:
Jonathan Chait makes a persuasive argument for why the Democratic Party should, ideologically and strategically, pursue John McCain as their 2004 presidential nominee ("What's in a Name?" April 29). However, Chait neglects to discuss two substantial obstacles that stand in the way of such a party-switching scenario. The first obstacle is that it would be virtually impossible for McCain to win the Democratic nomination outright. Chait points out that McCain would pull in independent and moderate Republican voters, but such a voting dynamic could only happen in an open primary. Many states either have caucuses (e.g., Michigan) or closed primaries (e.g., California), where McCain could not benefit from non-Democratic support. Consequently, the best McCain could hope for is a brokered convention; but as a newcomer to the party, he would certainly not be the compromise candidate of die-hard Democrats.

The second obstacle pertains to Chait's underestimation of the value of McCain's rhetorical principles and political legacy. McCain's repeated refrain during his 2000 run was that citizens should rise up to serve more than just their self-interest. By brazenly switching parties to fulfill a personal ambition, McCain would only be serving the self-interest of himself and of the Democratic Party.

Chait states that if McCain continues down the senatorial road he is currently on, he will inevitably end up like Scoop Jackson, whose legacy Chait characterizes as a "failure." But Jackson was an important senator who laid the groundwork for the Democratic Party's foreign policy credentials that eventually led to the election of the first two-term Democratic president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Better for McCain to stick to his convictions like Jackson—a figure who served a cause greater than self-interest—than to become like Captain Ahab, sacrificing everything in order to hunt fruitlessly for the great white whale that is the American presidency.

JONATHAN REFF
Fox Point, Wisconsin

Defensive posture

TO THE EDITORS:
As a long-standing subscriber to TNR, I am increasingly troubled by the stridency and one-sidedness of your coverage of the Middle East. TNR regularly pours scorn on anyone—American, European, or Arab—who criticizes Israeli policy. You never criticize Ariel Sharon's government; you never hint that Israeli actions (notably on settlements) may have contributed to the crisis; and you never seem to recognize that Palestinians have independent interests. You are dismissive of the Oslo accords and treat any deviation by the U.S. government from support for Israeli policy as weakness or betrayal.

Faced with all this contempt, I look for and don't find an answer to the simple question: What do you want? Do you completely reject any form of Palestinian statehood? Do you oppose any redistribution of territory and population? Do you accept any limitations on Jewish settlements or see any need for their removal? Do you have a solution, short of the old power-politics maxim—in this case, that the Israelis should do whatever their power allows them to do and the Palestinians should put up with it?

MARTIN STANILAND
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

In good faith

TO THE EDITORS:
Peter Beinart's TRB column "Bad Faith" was right on target (March 25). I have always been puzzled by the assertion that freedom and rights are granted by deity. If so, why were they withheld from humanity for so long? If, as the Declaration of Independence states, inalienable rights are attributable to a Creator, why was this not evident before 1776, and why were they enjoyed for a long time thereafter only by white males—and even then only imperfectly?

Isn't it better to recognize that freedom and rights exist only when people define them, assert them, and develop machinery to protect and defend them? Surely people of all theological persuasions could agree on that.

EDD DOERR
President
American Humanist Association
Washington, D.C. ■

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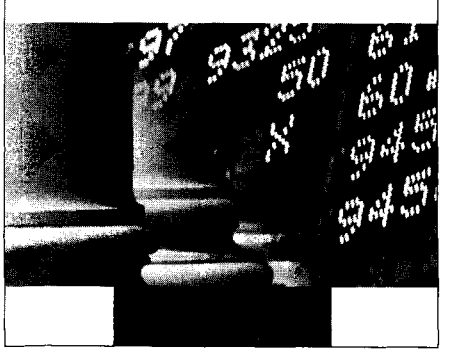

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Higher Ed

DAVID RIESMAN, AUTHOR of *The Lonely Crowd* (on which I collaborated), and of many other books, died May 10 at the age of 92. No one who knew him escaped the sense that here was a man of remarkable and idiosyncratic insight into American society, culture, politics. Riesman's take on any subject or individual was inevitably surprising and unexpected, and yet one knew his distinctive view of the world and people was never for effect, but rather reflected a unique way of seeing and understanding.

RIESMAN WAS A HARVARD PROFESSOR without a Ph.D. (there are probably others, but mostly in art, architecture, and music). He had been an undergraduate there, the editor of *The Harvard Crimson*, and a law student. He became a law clerk to Justice Louis Brandeis, a deputy assistant district attorney in New York City, an official at Sperry Gyroscope, a professor of law at the University of Buffalo, and a shaper of and teacher in the famous undergraduate social science program at the University of Chicago. He was never a graduate student, and undoubtedly his experiences as a lawyer in public and private practice contributed to the sense that he knew more about the world than the run of social scientists.

WHEN I MET HIM IN THE LATE 1940s, before he had written much more than law articles, I was impressed by the range of people he knew in New York—Lionel Trilling, Hannah Arendt, Meyer Schapiro, Margaret Mead, Erich Fromm. It reflected both a remarkably wide range of interests and a set of qualities that led people to take him seriously. (One of these was that he took *himself* seriously. He was not one for small talk.) At the time, I was an editor of *Commentary*, taking courses in sociology at Columbia, and had an interest in possibly teaching at the University of Chicago. Daniel Bell, then at Chicago, suggested I meet Riesman. The result was that I took a leave from *Commentary* to work with Riesman at Yale on the project that became *The Lonely Crowd*.

THE INITIAL PROGRAM THAT LED TO *The Lonely Crowd* may suggest something of what made David Riesman unique. He wanted to study the "don't knows" in public opinion polls—not because these "don't knows" reflected, as any run-of-the-mill political scientist would think, some failure in American public life, but rather because he thought he could learn something about American society and politics from them. He also described the project as a study of "political apathy," but, once again, he was not simply decrying it; under some circumstances he thought apathy could be something positive.

IT WAS MCGEORGE BUNDY, AS DEAN of the faculty of Arts and Sciences in the 1950s, who asked Riesman to return to Harvard with the mission of devoting himself entirely to undergraduates as a teacher, researcher, and general invigorator of undergraduate education. He created around the major course he taught at Harvard something like an ongoing seminar, to which he recruited as teaching fellows a remarkable galaxy of young social scientists, psychologists, and writers, many of whom went on to become professors at leading universities. The course became a shaping experience for them, as well as for the students who took it. Hundreds of students were astonished and gratified to receive from Riesman long letters of comment on their papers: No one at Harvard had ever listened to them so carefully.

RIESMAN WAS DEEPLY INTERESTED IN politics: Much of *The Lonely Crowd* deals with politics. But his politics were not easy to characterize. His early articles in law journals dealt with civil liberties; he was a vigorous defender of civil liberties and civil rights. He worked on a project to find jobs for academics escaping Adolf Hitler. It was simplest to define him as a liberal, but he was a liberal with a difference. He was suspicious of the smugness of much liberalism and willing to go further than, or perhaps not as far as, the prevailing liberalism of the day.

PERHAPS THE ONLY POLITICAL CAUSE in which he played an extended, open, and active role was the movement to control and ban atomic arms. He was always alert to this awesome and ultimate danger, even when it sank below the horizon of visible public concern. He created the "Committee of Correspondence" around this issue in 1960 and published a newsletter (I edited it for a time). Riesman was without illusions about the Soviet Union—a student visit there had immunized him against any—but he did not demonize it. In a famous exchange, he disputed Arendt's apocalyptic vision of totalitarianism and its capacity for total control of people and institutions: The commonness of humanity, he believed, made possible appeals to the Soviet Union that we were not exercising. One of his best-known articles was a science-fiction fantasy in which U.S. planes drop nylons and other consumer goods on the people of the Soviet Union.

IN THE MID-'50s, AFTER THE GREAT success of *The Lonely Crowd*, Riesman abandoned most of the topics on which he had written to devote himself single-mindedly to the study of American higher education. There too his "countercyclical" way of thinking, as he once called it, became evident. Known as an advocate of reform and utopian experiments, one would have expected him to be delighted at the transformation of American higher education under the impact of the student revolt, the Vietnam war, the civil rights revolution, and the women's revolution. But in all these, and in their impact on American higher education, Riesman saw a degree of self-indulgence and sloppy thinking that he did not like, even though he himself was a strong advocate of higher education reform, women's education, and civil rights. He always defended both separate educational institutions for women (and for men, too—he testified for a Southern military academy that was being sued to admit women) and full rights for women in integrated institutions. He was responsible for the first appointment of a woman tutor in a Harvard house, long before the houses became co-ed. But beginning in the 1960s, these tendencies he had championed ran to an excess he disapproved of.

RIESMAN WAS AN ENORMOUSLY DISciplined and productive worker, and the spirit of the later '60s and the 1970s did not appeal to him. He was particularly critical of the way affirmative action was implemented in colleges and universities. But in all this, he belonged to no party, went to no meetings, signed no public statements. Till the end, he remained a researcher and adviser to foundations, college boards, and college and university presidents on issues in higher education; and he gained the respect and admiration of scores of them. Their positions often required them to ostensibly support policies and programs that Riesman would have considered asinine. But he understood their position and the pressures upon them.

RIESMAN WAS TRULY AN ORIGINAL. In his writing and talking, he cast the issues of the day in a new light. He was a social scientist who demonstrated that in exploring the social world, art was as necessary as science. We do not see his like anywhere today.

NATHAN GLAZER

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